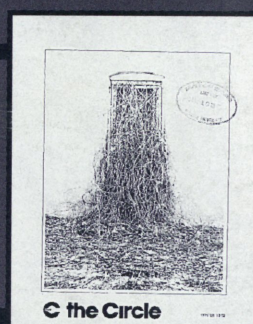
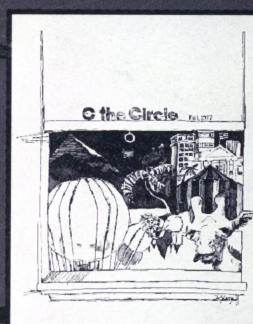
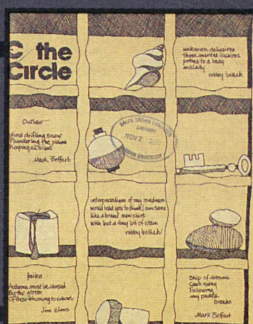
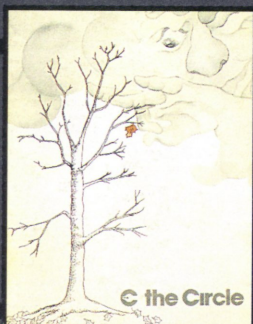
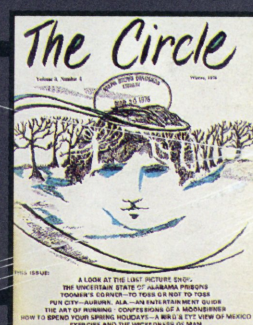
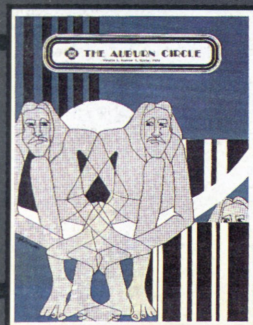
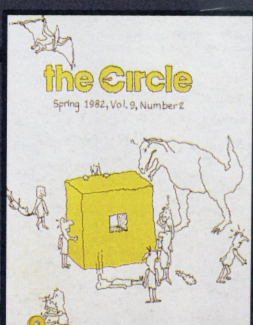
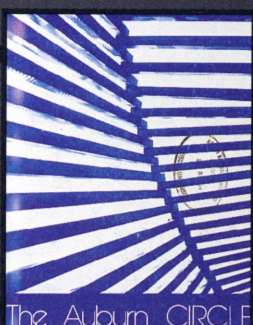
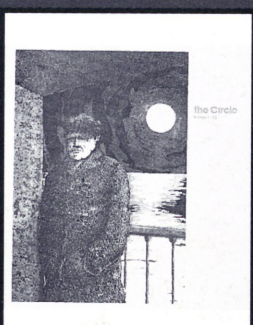
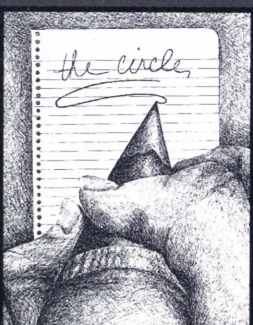
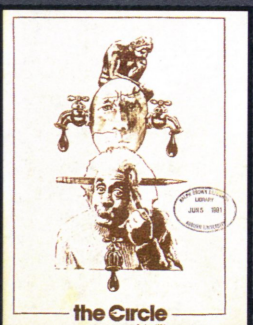
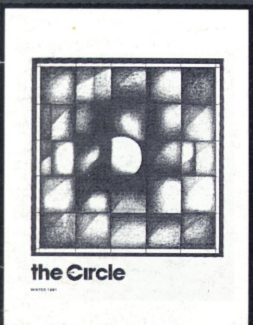
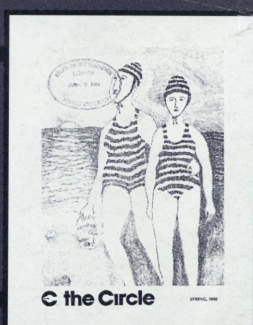
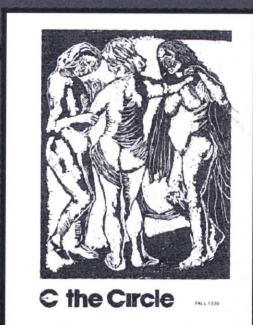
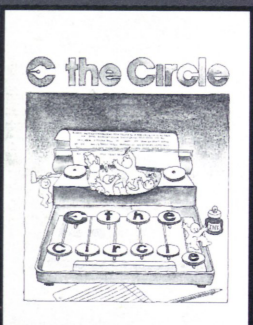
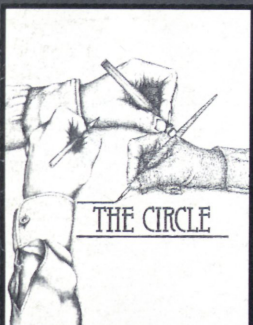


The Circle

Auburn's General Interest Magazine



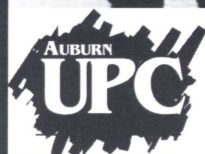
20th Anniversary



INSIDE: Surprise interview with Terry Bowden!

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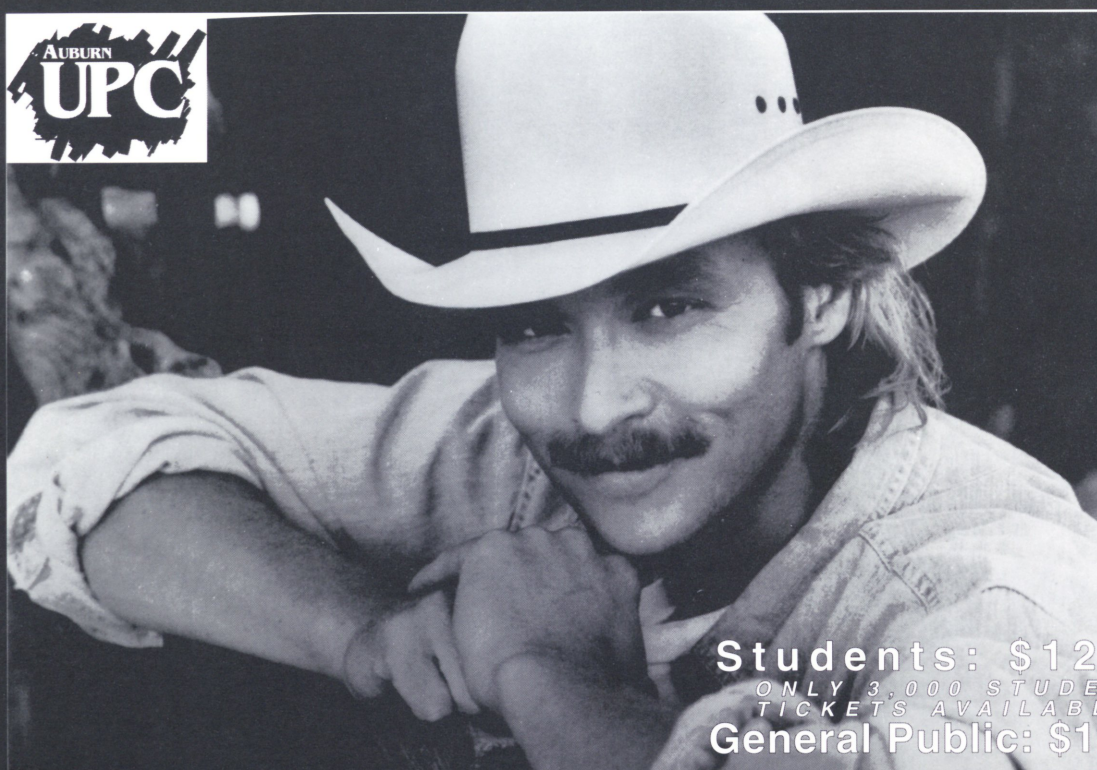
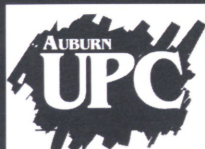
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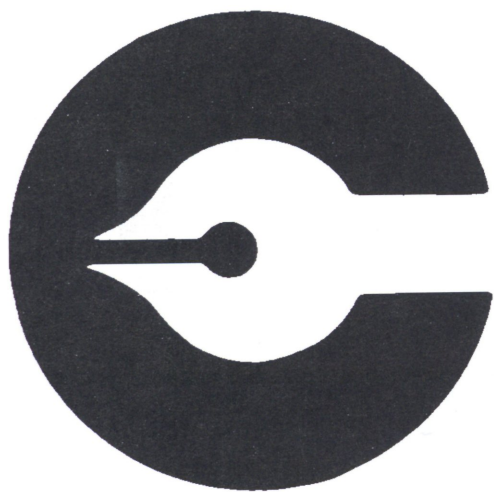
The Circle

Auburn's General Interest Magazine

Volume Number 20

Issue Number 1

The Auburn Circle, financed by advertising and student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse audience by providing a variety of features and investigative journalism, short stories, poetry, art and photography. The *Circle* is published three times a year- fall, winter, and spring- with an average distribution of 4,000 copies. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the advertising companies, the *Circle* staff, the publisher (the Board of Student Communications), or Auburn University, its administration, student body and Board of Trustees.



Colophon

This issue of *The Auburn Circle* was printed on 70-pound Matte paper by University Printing of Auburn, Alabama. All artwork was photographed by the *Circle* staff. The Journalism and fiction typeface is 10-point New Century Schoolbook. Poetry is 11-point Monaco.

The Staff

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The *Circle* accepts works from students, staff and alumni of Auburn University.

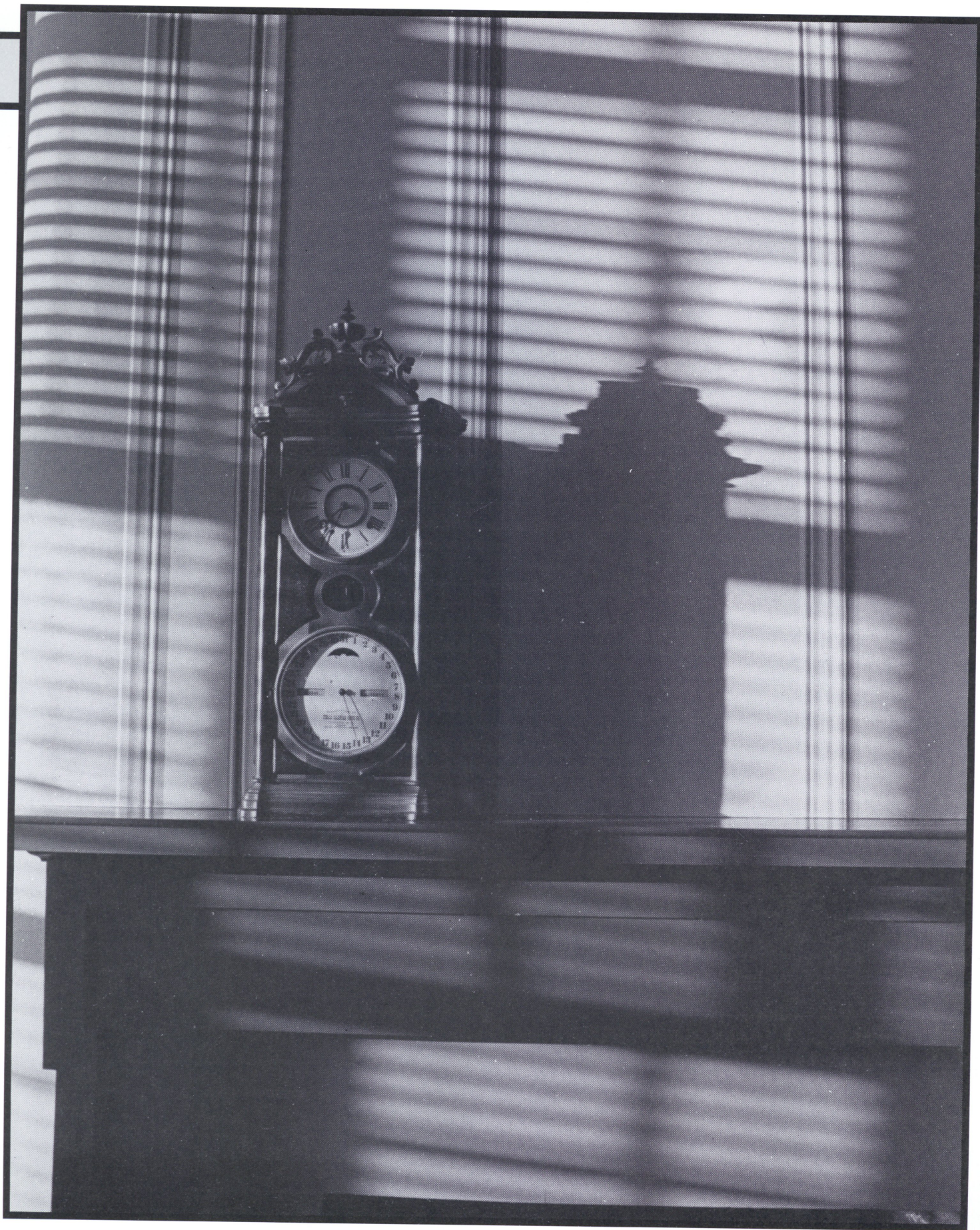
Prose, poetry, essays and articles should be typed or legibly hand-written. Submissions on computer disks are acceptable. The *Circle* has discreet access to both IBM and Apple Macintosh computers.

All artwork submitted remains in the *Circle* office and is photographed to reduced risk of damage. We accommodate artwork of any size and shape. Slide submissions are acceptable. Collections of related works by artists or photographers are accepted for our Gallery section.

All submissions become property of *The Auburn Circle* on a one-time printing basis only.

The *Circle* is located in the Publication's Suite, basement of Foy Union, down the outside steps from the War Eagle Cafeteria. For more information, call 844-4122 or write:

The Auburn Circle
Publication's Suite, Foy Union Building
Auburn University, AL 36849



Untitled
Richard A. Reading

Editor's Note

Before writing this issue's Editor's Note, I referred back to old issues, hoping for insight and wisdom to stimulate my brain. I must say that I am dismayed with what I found. Except for the first few issues, every letter from the editor offered, in some form or another, an apology for the issue's contents and a plea for more staff members and submissions.

I may be the first editor in twenty years to feel this way, but I am pleased with every aspect of this issue. My staff has been outstanding this quarter - calling the office at two in the morning to offer assistance in proofing, attending weekly meetings regularly, finding and selecting the most incredible submissions ever... Could an editor be any luckier?

The product, our twenty-year anniversary issue, showcases our hard work, and I believe even our toughest critics will find it enjoyable and thought provoking. To quote an earlier staff member, Elrod McKuen (Rod McKuen's cousin), "*The Circle* is an eclectic journal - an organic, human, living, breathing, and belching thing. No one will like everything, but everyone should like something. It's a beautiful thought."

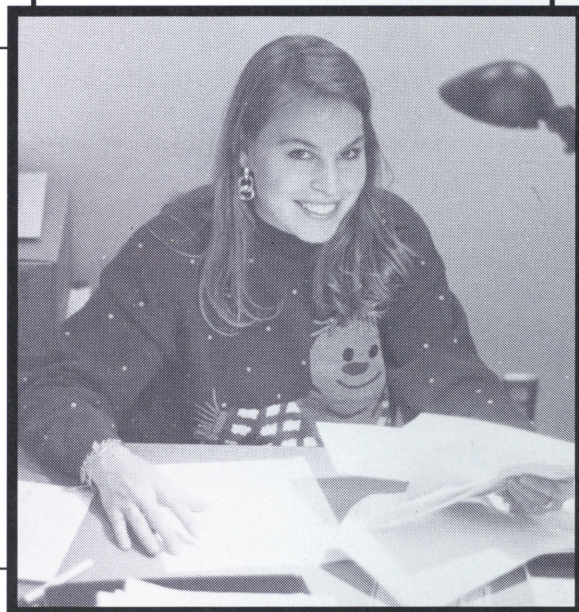
I have put in this issue the works and the writings my staff considers the best of today and those printed in the last twenty years. Also, I have included in this collection Thom Botsford's mock interview explaining why the magazine was started.

For the die-hard *Circle* reader, our twenty-year anniversary issue includes only a small portion of the photography, art, poetry, features and fiction published over the years. If it stirs your interest, a full collection may be found in the archives section of the library. For the more recent issues, the staff keeps a limited number on hand for publicity and advertising purposes. However, if you come by the office and inquire, someone will be happy to give you a copy.

Although I have one issue remaining before my editorship is complete, I would like to say that I have enjoyed every minute of being editor, and I would be editor for five more years if I were not graduating. Also, I would like to thank Karen Hall, who has assisted me innumerable times, both with advice and support; Catherine Payne, who takes down thousands of messages for me every day; Perrin Ehlinger, who without his expertise, the magazine would not be possible; my friends at University Printing and at Kinko's, who have to deal with my exactness and persistence each quarter; and most importantly, Y.O.U., *The Circle's* lifeline.

Happy reading!

Wynne Johnson
Auburn Circle Editor



Wynne Johnson, Circle Editor



Perrin Ehlinger, Design Editor



Forum

Editor, Circle Magazine,

This letter is in response to Perrin Ehlinger's editorial in the Fall '93 issue. He holds a common opinion on the Auburn campus and, as an SGA officer, I just wanted to inform him and his readers on what the SGA and Auburn University is doing about the parking problem.

He mentioned the two new Hill dorms, which are presently under construction. This construction has temporarily blocked access to two parking lots on The Hill. However, it is our understanding that the university intends to provide access to these lots once construction on the two dorms is completed. In addition to this, the university has recently opened a large parking lot (approximately 300 spaces) to the southeast of The Hill dorms right off Lem Morrison Drive.

Another interesting point that Mr. Ehlinger brings up is the possibility of a campus transit system. On December 1, 1993, the Technical Advisory Committee of the Lee-Russell Council of Governments held a kick-off meeting for the feasibility study that is currently being conducted by the Grove-Shade consultant firm. This firm is studying the feasibility of a transit system for the city of Auburn and Auburn University. Dr. Jimmy Ferguson is representing Auburn University, and Michael Musselwhite is our SGA representative on the committee. The firm expects to be completed with the study by the middle of March. We will be anxiously awaiting the results of this study. If you have any questions or suggestions on parking or any other topic, please feel free to call me in the SGA office at 844-4240.

David Martin
SGA Vice President
04 FYR

Editor, Circle Magazine,

After reading the letter from Darryl K. Fisherson (phony or not) in your fall issue, I felt the need to write. Although he/she did not enjoy the writings of Mr. Ehlinger in the spring issue, I found them thought-provoking. As for upholding the fundamental Christian values of our community and campus, perhaps Mr./Ms. Fisherson should look outside. Auburn is made up of a wonderful blend of Moslems, Jews and Buddhists, as well as Christians.

The Circle is a general interest magazine, and as such should show a variety of perspectives, writings and art.

Although some readers may not appreciate or acknowledge everything in it, *The Circle* should be a soapbox for everyone, not just the religious right.

Samuel B. Wilkinson
Soph., Management

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Circled

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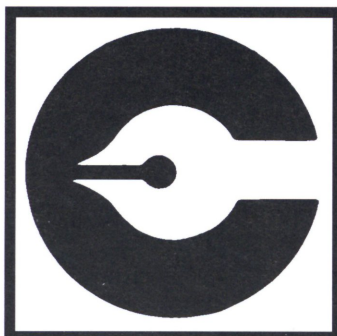
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RUSSIA

Article and Photographs by R. Perrin Ehlinger

Never before have I found myself completely dumbfounded sitting at a typewriter trying to describe an experience. Hardly the best beginning to an article, but perhaps it is appropriate. I have had limited travel outside of the U.S. previously, but nothing could have prepared for me this... there is nothing else like it, and I am still trying to sort out my feelings.

If it were up to me, I would have filled these three or four pages with nothing but photographs, and try to let them speak for themselves, since my abilities are strained by the task. But perhaps if I share a story with each picture, I will be sharing more than I could in a forced article, and maybe a piece of Russia - the Russia that was buried beneath communism and is now in political and economic upheaval; the Russia that has always been there - can be viewed in some of its glory.



Above: St. Basil's Cathedral highlights the show at the Kremlin, with a fairytale dazzle of color and shapes. It was built to celebrate Ivan the Terrible's victory over the Tatars in the 11th century, and the rumor is that he had the Architect blinded so that nothing as beautiful could be built again. Not quite what I had in mind when I chose my career.



Above Left: The Weapons and Arms museum in Red Square at the Kremlin. What most people are unaware of is that Red Square does not receive its name from the Communists. The word "Red" in Russian is synonymous with "Great."



Above: Güm shopping center, Red Square. With the institution of capitalistic reforms in Russia, one of the first things to reappear was this Market Place, which is now crowded heavily with shoppers. There is a large selection of Western products, from a Pizza Hut booth to Guess Jeans to RCA televisions. Soviet State manufactured products are also sold here, though the lines were not quite as long. Shortly after leaving here, there was a Mafia related incident where two people were shot and three more killed when a grenade exploded in their car. Mafia related crime is considered by the Russians to be the largest reform problem to date.



Left: This monumental sculpture is entitled Worker and Farm Woman, by Vera Mukhina, and highlights the entrance to the Soviet Exhibition at the Moscow World's Fair, circa 1920..

Above: The Russian Parliamentary building, commonly known as the Russian White House. This photo was taken a mere two weeks before the Communist Party faced off with Boris Yeltsin and tank shells destroyed the top half of the building.

On our way to visit Lenin's Tomb, we ran across a Communist Party protest in downtown Moscow. While they were not overtly hostile to me as I photographed them, I could tell that my attentions were unwanted, until I explained myself as being a journalist, at which point they smiled and relaxed. This was not a large demonstration, consisting of less than one hundred people, and it didn't seem to receive much support from the crowd which had gathered to watch.

Above Right: Posters declaring Gorbachev's book *Perestroika* as the cause of all their problems.

Right: Faithful still to the ideals of the Soviet Union, this is one of several hammer and sickle flags that was being waved and paraded around the demonstration.

Bottom Right: Drunken old ladies seemed to compromise the majority of this demonstration's constituents. In this picture they are singing a Socialist working song.

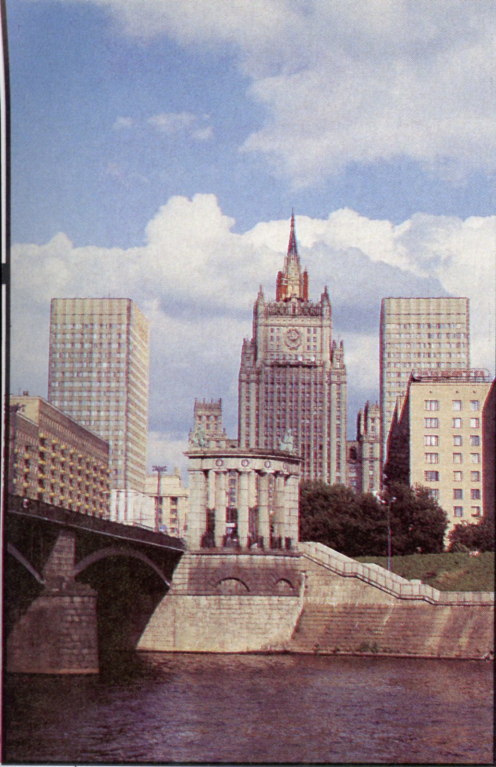


Left: A view of the city Sergiev Posad, about ten miles outside of Moscow. This is one of the few "typical" Russian village scenes our tour group was able to see. Scenes like this are disappearing fast in Russia, as the youth migrate to the larger cities, and old wooden homes such as this are allowed to rot into decay, or are torn down to make room for megablock highrises.



Left: Sergiev Posad Monastery. Under Communist Rule, this Monastery was turned into a museum and bureaucratic center. Since the freeing of religion under Gorbachov, the Russian Orthodox church has since purchased the land back, restored the churches to their present state, and reopened the monastery to tourism. This particular monastery survived the Napoleonic wars and both World Wars miraculously unscathed. Of all of what little of Russia I saw on this trip - this place was the most impressive... a veritable gingerbread fairyland. While we were there, three couples were married, and we were allowed to listen to the choir practice their hymns - a deep, resonating style of music, similar to the Gregorian Chants.





Right: Due to housing shortages, monstrous mega-block apartment buildings have been built up and down the Moscow River. All are poorly built - there are few stores within walking distance, and nothing in the way of restaurants or entertainment. My pet theory is that housing like this causes the high alcoholism and suicide rates in Russia - not the political unrest.

Left: When Lenin took control of the Soviet Union, most of Moscow was razed and rebuilt under Communist guidance and ideals. While Stalinistic architecture is not particularly beautiful - it is definitely overpowering. This picture brings to mind Gotham City.



Above: Kolomenskaya Estate. Formerly Peter the Great's Moscow estate, Catherine the Great burned it down and built this monastery. Under Communist rule, it was turned into a park, and is still used as one today, with many people swimming in the polluted Moscow River just behind it.



Left: When Czar Alexander was killed by terrorists in the 19th century, this church was erected on the site as a monument. It is the last great church built in the Russian Orthodox style, and is one of the most splendid.



The Summer Palaces, dating back to Peter the Great, were bombed to their foundations during World War II. Afterwards, Stalin had them rebuilt, with great hardship and cost to life of the workers; almost as bad as when Peter the Great had them built originally. This was treated as an object lesson by Stalin - showing how the Communist party was better by not exploiting their workers like the Czars. Even with such a miserable history, this royal "get-away" from St. Petersburg is impressive, with beautiful gardens, fountains, and rows and rows of Renaissance-Baroque palaces and guest houses. Much of the original Russian artwork and sculpture was rescued from theft by the German forces, and have been restored to the palaces.

Left: fine gold-leaf tracery and ornamentation decorate the palace interiors.

Right: Baroque, Renaissance, and Russian styles collide impressively in this Palace Wing.

Below: the garden allows an impressive full view of the Palace and its fountains.





Left: Not an uncommon sight, many Russians spend their time in solitary contemplation on park benches, a reminder of the difficulties and hardships of modern Russian life.

Right: The statue of Stalin, now residing in Statue Park, a sculpture garden across the street from Gorky Park. The removal of this statue was broadcast by C.N.N. during the failed coup attempt in 1990. This and other toppled monuments have found a permanent home in Statue Park.



Left: One of the many results of democratic reform was the introduction of foreign businesses. In historic Moscow, we happened across this Canadian pizza chain just finishing their first Moscow restaurant.. In Moscow, McDonald's has three restaurants and Pizza Hut has two. Honestly, this was the best food in the country - probably the safest, too.



Above: Quickly becoming a common site, the open markets are usually teeming with people haggling and selling - though everyone complained that no one was buying. This market is selling items to tourists - Matushka dolls, hand painted chess sets, and military medals and clothing were the most common items. Every vendor preferred U.S. dollars to their own currency, and there were some who refused to accept rubles. In fact, the majority of bank deposits made in Russia are made in either U.S. Dollars or German deutschmarks. With the ruble inflating wildly and being nontransferable to other currencies, most Russians prefer it this way - for the present.

Below: With the freeing of religion, the Russian Orthodox Church has grown fast, becoming a strong political and social force in the former Soviet Union... but one thing the Russians truly enjoy about this is being married in the Church, a practice which until Gorbachev, had been forbidden since the October Revolution during WWI. Not only are young couples being married for the first time through the church, but older couples, previously married only legally, are being remarried in the eyes of God.



Above: Pectopah is the Russian spelling for "Restaurant." Since before Perestroika, there were no privately owned restaurants, almost all of the ones today still bear this generic sign, which became something of a joke among our tour group. A typical Russian restaurant meal consists of cabbage, cabbage, cabbage... cucumber, a smoked fish or salami selection, plenty of sour-dough bread, sometimes a grease soup, and then an entrée of one sort or another - fish, steak, or chicken. Russian food is pretty miserable by Western standards, and the waiters were not overly helpful at most places. Often their payment is the left-overs, so they'd just as soon you didn't eat as much, anyway.



J.P. Kaetz's Literary Figure Mixed Drink Guide



I was musing idly at my desk one day (an activity I enjoy almost as much as filling my navel with Alka-Seltzer and immersing myself in a full bathtub) over the idea of why certain famous restaurants in New York and other such cities name some of their dishes after famous movie stars. I then realized that I had never heard of them naming dishes after famous literary figures. After my initial shock over this realization had passed I determined that I would create a monument to some choice figures by linking their names to mixed drinks, both old standards and a few new concoctions. The choice of alcohol as a medium seemed somehow fitting at that moment. Here is the result of my labor.

The Samuel Coleridge Lift

1 oz. Tawny Port
2 oz. El Arafat's Prize Opium
Twist of Lemon

Mix with ice and drink while strumming a dulcimer.

The Joyce Kilmer Delight

2 oz. Creme de Menthe (Green)
2 tblsp. powered sugar
1 oz. Maple Syrup

Shake with ice, strain into a highball glass, fill with carbonated water. Tastes best when bolted down quickly, without stopping closely to examine the contents.

The A.E. Housman

1 tsp. Angostura Bitters
1 tsp. Abbott's Aged Bitters
1 tsp. Peychaud's Bitters
1 tsp. Orange Bitters
Juice of 1 lemon
2 oz. Dry Gin

Shake with ice and pour into bathtub. Mix 300 more and pour into bathtub. Wallow in the mixture for eight hours.

The F. Scott Fitzgerald Pink Squirrel

1 oz. Creme de Noyaux
1 tblsp. Creme de Cacao
1 tblsp. light sweet cream

Shake with ice and strain into glass. Grasp glass lightly, lovingly, gazing deeply into its being as you draw it slowly toward your waiting lips. Hesitate for one breathless moment, then drink deeply of its cold sweetness. Do this for years and die young.



The Sylvia Plath Gin Fizz

Juce of 1 lemon
1 tsp. powdered sugar
2 oz. Dry Gin
1 bottle of tranquilizers or sleeping pills

Shake all ingredients together, pour in highball glass, fill with carbonated water and drink in extreme proximity to a gas oven.

The James Joyce Jumble

2 ozqt. Vodrubourgisheort
2 dastsp. Bitlimon
Shith crice. Serith anolimond.

Dylan Thomas Punch

1 qts. Gin
2 qts. Bourbon
2 bottles Champagne
1 pint Rum
2 bottles Sherry
1 qt. Vodka

Mix all ingredients in a tin bucket. Decorate with ferns and an olive. Serves one.

Hemingway Bull Shot

2 oz. Vodka
3 oz. Chilled Beef Bouillon
1 dash Tabasco Sauce
Ear of a Bull

Shake with cracked ice, garnish with the bull's ear. Drink on safari during sexual intercourse in the back of a jeep, preferably in the middle of a small civil war.

Sartre Sling

Juice of 1 lemon
1 tsp. powdered sugar
2 oz. Gin
1 tbsp. Cherry Flavored Brandy
Carbonated Water
1 oz. Vomit

Mix sugar, lemon juice and Gin in a collins glass. Add carbonated water, stir. Float Brandy and Vomit on top. Observe its vague, cold luminosity. Let the exquisite perfume fill your senses. Decide that all is tainted, all are alone. Despair.



His Train of Thought

Elaine Posanka

Ethan Lebovics had made a mistake. He looked up at his wife who seemed to be waiting for him to say something.

"I'm sorry, I got sidetracked. What did you ask me?"

She gave him an exasperated look, "I asked what you wanted for lunch."

"Oh, I'll go out with the guys for lunch, thanks." Ethan looked back down at his breakfast. He took two more bites of egg and arranged his bacon into parallel strips on the plate.

"Is it tonight you promised to meet Carla at LaGuardia and ride out to Long Island with her?" Ethan's wife asked.

"Yeah. I'm gonna stay out there until after her mother's funeral and then ride back in with her."

"OK Ethan, I think the vacation will do you good. You've been so spacey lately. Give Carla my love." She mumbled something else that he thought was 'and Jimmy only three months dead, poor thing.'

Ethan stared at the bacon, took a last gulp of coffee and grabbed the morning paper before leaving for work. He jumped down the front steps of his brownstone two at a time. He walked east on West Fourth Street towards the bus station, turning down 6th Avenue he passed the A/C/E, but Ethan hadn't taken the subway since Carla had been raped in an uptown station nearly eleven years ago.

When the School Bus freed them for the day, Ethan and Carla walked down the tracks of the Long Island Rail Road. Each balanced on the parallel rails, their arms flung wide like airplane wings. They didn't speak except for when Carla lost her balance and fell backwards onto the embankment.

"Hey, you OK?" Ethan offered Carla his hand.

"Of course. But thanks for helping steady me before I lost my balance." She looked up at him with her twelve-year-old grin and, hanging onto his hand, pulled herself up.

"What, and have both of us fall? Wassamatta, you get grass-stains on your clothesywoseies?"

Ethan scowled and took off down the tracks jumping ever other tie. Ethan pushed his hair out of his eyes and watched her run off. He gave her too much of a head start. When he made it to the train yard she was already there, sitting on a stack of cross-ties, undoubtedly getting tar on the seat of her shorts.

Ethan climbed up the steps of an old commuter car. He forced open the door and walked down the aisle between the seats. Yellowed foam stuffing poked out from torn red vinyl seat covers. Ethan tore a chunk off and stuffed it into his pocket. It would be good for breaking up into little crumbs and throwing at Carla later. He walked back towards the door. Carla was sitting on the train steps now, bent over



poking intently at the bottom of the rusty door. He tossed a couple foam crumbs into her hair.

"Hey, quittit." She sounded annoyed and did not look up.

Ethan went back inside the car and pulled down a cardboard Crown Royal ad. He brought it out to Carla and offered it.

"Thanks." She left the rust alone for a while to peel the top blue layer of paper off the cardboard. When she had a good piece peeled away, she carefully tore around the faceted bottle until she had just that small curling piece which she folded up and put in her pocket. Ethan picked the last piece of foam out of her hair and jumped off the steps.

"Listen," he turned around to face her, "I didn't want to tell you, but my parents say that after the divorce, I have to live with my mom in Brooklyn."

"Oh no, how will I survive the rest

of Junior High without you?"

"Mom says you can visit every weekend; she'll clear it with your mom; it'll be fun." Ethan tried to seem cheery.

"Yeah," Carla grew more serious when she realized her sarcasm had hurt him, "I can take the train in."

The bus reached 34th street. Ethan got off, walked into Penn station past the L.I.R.R. trains and up the escalator to his desk in the newly renovated Madison Square Garden promotions office. As he washed out his coffee cup in the employee kitchen he overheard some of the guys talk about the latest fight they had booked. They would need to hire extra security for the Garden that night. Ethan stared at baby blue plastic handles on molded mauve formica cabinets and dried his cup.

Maybe next year when they were both at N.Y.U. he'd have her all to himself the way it had been in high school.

Carla stood at the edge of the subway platform on the wrong

side of the thick yellow line. She leaned way over peering down into the dimness of the tracks five feet below.

"There's one," she shouted pointing into the gloom. Carla always won spot-the-rat even though Ethan lived in the city and had plenty of opportunity to practice.

Carla and Ethan walked down the platform on the wrong side of the yellow line, their backs to the tracks, looking up at the backs of the signs which hung from the ceiling and announced which trains stopped on which tracks (if you were looking at the other side of them). They came to one that was painted with black and white diagonal stripes.

"You know if you get in here you'll be sitting in the conductor's car."

"Why would you want to ride in the car with him?" she asked.

"'Cause that's where the cop or Guardian Angel is."



1st Place



1993-94 Fiction Writing Contest

Ethan looked up suddenly from his paperwork to see the promo supervisor standing in the doorway to his office.

"What's wrong Lebovics, did I startle you? You can't be that engrossed in your work. What're you dreamin' about?"

Ethan rubbed his forehead with the thumb and fingers of his right hand. "I dunno, maybe I need a vacation; I can't seem to focus on anything."

The supervisor hiked up a pant leg and sat on the edge of Ethan's desk. He picked up a photograph of Ethan and his wife, put it down, picked up a high school photo of Carla.

"Your daughter?" he asked indicating the picture, "She looks to old to be your daughter."

Ethan's elbow rested on the desk, his forehead still cupped in his right hand. He looked up at the supervisor without moving his head.

"No," he answered, just a high school...friend." He had to search for a way to categorize Carla.

"Sure, a friend. Listen Lebovics take a couple sick days or somethin' but snap outta it. I need a lotta press releases for the Tyson fight and you'll have ta be ON, know what I mean?" The supervisor put down Carla's picture after taking one last look at it. "She's

Italian, ain't she? My kinda gurl." He left without waiting for an answer.

Ethan met Carla at the Flatbush Ave. train station every other Friday night. 'Visitation Rights' they jokingly called it. She got out of the train this week looking excited.

"Jimmy MacDougal asked me to the

But Ethan thought "yes you can, and once I show you it's possible, you'll come back."

prom." she announced before he asked her. "Mom's taking me dress-shopping next week."

"So you're going with him?"

"Of course, who else would I go with?"

Who are you taking to your prom?"

Ethan was quiet as they walked down 7th Ave. toward Park Slope where his mother's brownstone was. Carla babbled on about her prom plans. Maybe next year when they were both at N.Y.U. he'd have her all to himself the way it had been before high school.

Ethan walked up 7th Ave. toward Times Square for lunch. He bought a hotdog with mustard and sauerkraut and a bottle of Paul Newman's Roadside Virgin Lemonade from

a sidewalk cart along the way and ate it slowly. He looked at the porno theater signs but XXX Space Sluts in the Slammer had never interested him beyond the title. A bench near the Duffy statue was empty and he headed for it.

"Hey [A-hole], look where yur going!" The cabbie yelled out and leaned on his horn.

Ethan jumped back onto the sidewalk spilling some Virgin Lemonade down the front of his shirt. He looked both ways and then crossed the street. In front of the bench was a subway grate. Under his feet Ethan could hear the subways rushing through the tunnels.

"It's a sound sculpture; listen to it."

Ethan and Carla stood on the subway grate arms out wide and heads thrown back.

"I feel it," Carla was equally enthusiastic. "I feel the different pitches rising and swirling as if I were standing in the middle of them. It is a sculpture; you were right."

A homeless man interrupted Ethan's thoughts.

"I'm sorry, this your bench?"

"Naw man, I **said**, 'spare a quarter?'"

"Oh, yeah." Ethan dug in his pants pocket and gave the man the change from his hotdog and lemonade.

"Thanks, man." The homeless guy moved on to the next bench.

Ethan sat watching the guy go from bench to bench and then walk off down 42nd street towards the Port Authority bus station. The subway grate under Ethan's feet shook and whistled as another train passed.

"Know what I like best about the subways?" Carla asked, "I like the way they shake side to side when they get going really fast."

"Great," Ethan said. "I'll be the one that shakes to pieces."

"Oh, don't be so morose. Jimmy says all you music majors are morose."

Ethan didn't care what white-bread-WASP Jimmy said. He had felt sure that Carla would dump Jimmy after a year apart, but their Boston-New York romance seemed to be going well.

"I'm sorry. What I like best are the ads." Ethan pointed to his current favorite, a health department comic strip about AIDS starring Marisol and Hector. A new installment of it appeared every month on the trains in both Spanish and English.

"Yeah, the ads are cool too." She smiled at his effort to cheer up.

Ethan returned from lunch and went immediately to the print media department.

"Hey, you guys gonna advertise the Tyson fight on the subways?"

"Lebovics, isn't it your job to write press releases? Why don't you leave the ads to us."

"Sorry, I just...thought it was a good...thought..."

"We're gonna do the sides of busses thing,



but train strips are small stuff for the health dept. or Johnson's Sofa. Don't you notice these things?"

Ethan went back to his desk. He felt tired after the walk back from lunch and put his feet up to take a cat nap. He awoke suddenly from a dream about Marisol and Hector with the vague feeling he'd been speaking out loud.

The red 7th Ave. express screamed through the station. Its square blunt front wobbled side to side. Ethan stared down at the tracks in front of the train and then looked guiltily side to side wondering if anyone had seen him.

"Ethan, what are you looking for? I'm trying to tell you how devastated I am."

"Sorry, Carla. Why?"

"Because of Jimmy! Haven't you been listening to a thing I've said?"

Ethan hadn't heard anything since the news that Jimmy was transferring to a college in Minnesota. He was afraid he'd sound too jubilant.

"Do you want to see the Mary Cassat exhibit at the Met this weekend?" He offered as an apology for not listening and as a date, but he knew she'd never take it that way.

"Yeah, sure."

Ethan finished the last of the days releases at 3:00. He decided to leave early in case the busses to LaGuardia were running slow. He didn't want Carla to have to wait for him.

"But why Minnesota?" Ethan looked up at Carla.

"Don't worry Eth, you can have visitation rights." Carla smiled.

"I'll kill him for you, if you want, then you can stay here."

"Eth, that's very sweet of you to be so angry, but it's best if I go away." Carla looked at him, concerned. "Besides, killing him won't make the subways safe, and I certainly can't live in New York taking busses all of the time." Her voice broke.

But Ethan thought 'yes you can, and once I show you it's possible, you'll come back.'

She called him once she arrived in Minnesota.

"It's smaller of course, but I think Macalester's a lot like N.Y.U. They even have morose music majors here." She teased him. "The plane ride, Ethan, it wasn't anything like the subway. When you take off the force presses you back into your seat. It's like the air would pass through you if it could. Like the sound sculpture. It doesn't shake a bit."

Ethan stood outside the 6th Avenue subway station. He stared at the steps for a long time knowing the train would take him to LaGuardia and Carla a lot faster than the bus. Ethan walked towards the entrance and grasping the thick round rail went down one step at a time. He reached the bottom and looked around. Go right for uptown, left for downtown. He walked up to the glass token

booth, slipped the woman a five dollar bill through the slot and held up one finger for one token. She slid back the token and his change. Immediately a homeless woman was at his elbow.

"Spare some change?"

He gave her the \$3.25. She moved quickly away before he could change his mind. Ethan stood before the turnstiles for a long time, just out of the way of the steady stream of people. The transport police began to eye him with suspicion. Ethan looked at the token in his fingers. A small smooth silver disk within a rough bronze circle. He rubbed the token between his thumb and forefinger feeling the difference between the bronze and silver parts. Carla was coming home.

He walked toward the uptown trains, dropped the token into the slot on top of the turnstile and then pushed through the turnstile onto the subway platform. At the edge of the platform he looked down searching for subway rats. He felt a hand on his shoulder, it was the transit cop.

"Hey, buddy, you OK?"

"Yeah, thanks." Ethan didn't move or look up.

He spotted a rat just as the platform began to shake and the 6th Ave. Express rumbled into view.



**THIS STORY HAS BEEN
EDITED FOR PROFANITY.**

Tunnel Vision Ashley Moody



Dwellings

Elaine Posanka

The time for burning is past.
Only December hangs from bare branches -
sketched across the dusk.
Out back, crouched in frost and
half-rotted leaves, I prop
sticks into pyramids.

More and more twigs,
my teepees grow corners,
change into stacked dwellings;
Long-Houses, Cabins, Stables.
During the night I believe
Something holy will discover them
and be born.

Brushing off, I turn
towards the brick duplex.
Blinking lights mark my window.
Inside, the solidity of cinder-block, linoleum,
and clean sheets that crackle like straw.

Parable

Stewart Todd

It was so important to keep
my box of crayons arranged
exactly like hers
that only two circles were
on my paper at the
end of drawing time.
That was the same day
I got my first wrong answer
in my activity book and
she laughed at me.

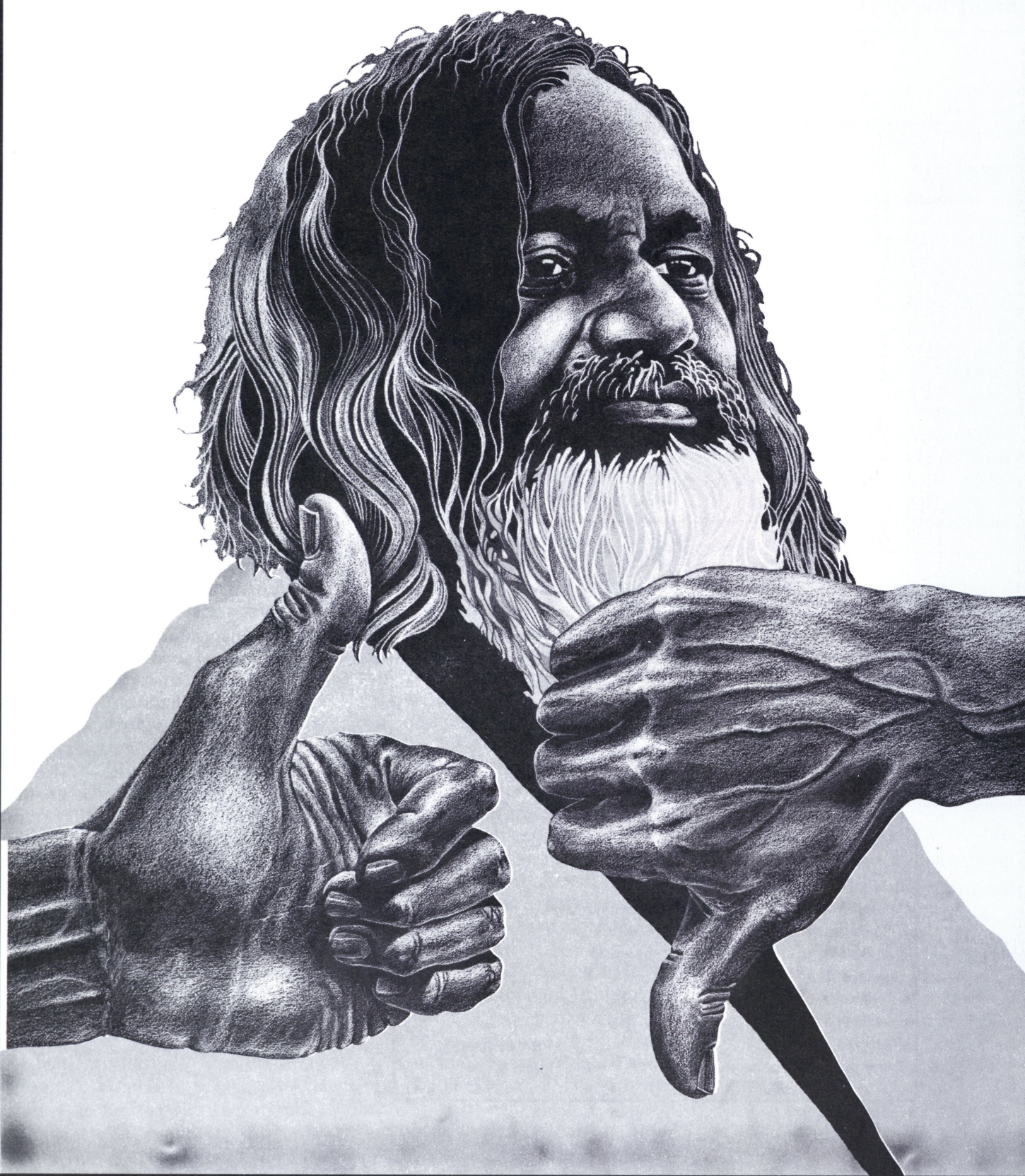
***Of the red wheelbarrows,
which two are the same?***

I cried during nap time,
but later in the day
purposely put my red crayon
next to the black one
and told her that
no two wheelbarrows
are the same.

Flashback



Betsy Burts
Spring 1982



Rick Lovell
Fall 1976

California Dreaming

Kathy Flann

Becky had wondered all along if the dreams meant something. This last one woke her up. They were all at the beach — Becky, Dad, Becky's stepmother Kim, and her stepbrother Jimmy. No, there were more people that she knew, but who were they? She and Jimmy stood embracing while people sat on the gold sand and stared at them. Dad and Kim sat closest, their necks straining to look up. She didn't remember any water. She stood squeezing Jimmy as tightly as she could. Her hand slid up and down the back of his neck.

"I miss you all the time," she said.

"I miss you, too," he whispered.

"You do?" Becky kissed him on the mouth and pressed her hands harder into his back, ignoring all of the people staring at them from the sand. Why was Dad so angry? He sat up and Becky could see his yelling mouth over Jimmy's shoulder, but could hear nothing. Ah, they were jealous. Wait — kissing Jimmy? Becky gasped and sat straight up in her bed.

The clock read 5 a.m. — Dad would be getting up for work in half an hour. Becky supposed their bed seemed really big to him since Kim left. Jimmy used to fall asleep in her room when she talked about boys late at night. Now, her room seemed huge.

She flung the covers back and sat up.

Tom had his eyes open for fully thirty seconds before he remembered he was alone in the bed. Where was Kim? Oh, yes. He allowed it to creep sickeningly back into his mind.

"Shit."

He put on the tan suit. Kim called it something else...What was it? Oh, right — "mocha." He thought of it as dark tan. Jimmy was coming out of it, they said. He'd better tell Stan he needed a few more days off. He and Becky could fly out there Wednesday or, hell, tomorrow.

Becky sat down on the floor and rested her head on the mattress. His fingers closed around her hand when she put it in his, but he did not wake up.

"Beck, honey, you're in here again." He sat on the edge of Jimmy's bed and put his hand on her shoulder. Becky rolled onto her back and opened her eyes. God, they were the biggest eyes he'd ever seen — great big blue things just like her mother, wherever the hell she was. He still could not believe she was sixteen already, the same age her mother had been when he met her.

"He misses me, Daddy. He's going to come back."

"Sure, honey, of course he is."

"Do I have to go to school today?" She squeezed Jimmy's koala bear. Where the hell did she get that? Jimmy hadn't played with that since he was ten. Since it happened, she spent all of her time in here with Jimmy's stuff.

"Yes, why?"

"Well, I don't know...It's just that Dirk keeps following me around. He waits for me outside all my classes."

"Well, isn't he your boyfriend?"

"Not anymore. Dad, I couldn't have a boyfriend knowing Jimmy is in a coma, could you?" She jumped out of the bed and went into Jimmy's bathroom and slammed the door.

"Hey, Stan..." Tom pushed the office door open a little further. "Can I come in?" Stan looked up from the open file in his lap. Those round, black glasses rested on the end of his nose. Tom walked closer to the desk. There were no chairs in Stan's office except for the one he sat in.

"Look, I could really use a few more days off. The doctors say Jimmy's coming out of it and I'd really like to, you know, be there with my wife."

"He's not your natural son, is he?" Stan pressed the glasses back to his forehead with his middle finger and let his mouth fall open a little.

"No. He's my wife's son."

"Mmmm. Well, quite honestly, there is a lot to be done here. How far have you gotten on that amphibian piece?"



"It's finished." [Stupid] wetlands. They were so "in" now. You'd think the EPA had nothing else to worry about.

"Well, all right, then. You can start on the waterfowl when you get back."

Becky looked around the restroom door. Cindy leaned against the wall outside loudly sucking on a grape Jolly Rancher and clutching her books to her chest.

"Is he gone?"

"Yes, and probably for good this time."

"Good." Becky came out and dropped the heart necklace on top of Cindy's books.

"You're psycho. Dirk is so totally hot." Becky winced at Cindy's humid, grape breath.

"You have him."

"Becky? ...Hello?" Becky looked over at Cindy in the driver's seat.



Runner Up

It was 2 o'clock and they sped down the road toward Becky's house. She couldn't see the blood anymore; only Cindy staring at her.

"It's Jimmy..."

"Again? What did you see?" Cindy glanced at the road and then back at Becky.

"There's this long, long road. It's real flat, you know, like you can see a long way. Way at the end, there's this tiny person on a motorcycle getting closer and closer. I can't hear it or anything. I'm watching from the middle of the road, right? I see it coming, but I can't move. And I guess he doesn't see me until the last minute because he swerves and the bike

He leaned out and looked up the aisle. God. Where was she?

"Dad?" Becky put her hand on his arm.

"Hey! You were out for a long time. How'd you sleep?"

"Dad? Is he dead? I mean, he's not dead, right?" She put her forehead on his shoulder..

"What?"

"I don't know. Never mind." She leaned against the window again and closed her eyes again. Tom didn't know why he never knew what she was talking about. Probably because she was sixteen. She always did have that imagination, though.

He got a postcard from Becky's mother once a long time ago. Becky was about eight, so it must have been three years after Barb

"Yeah, she couldn't wait. She kept yelling at me to hurry up, so I dropped her off and parked the car."

"She told me. Tom...Bob's here." Shit. Tom didn't know if he could talk to that [a-wipe.] He never liked him anyway, but now...Geez, letting the kid go for a joyride on his motorcycle. Jimmy had never even ridden one before. The guy was a genius. Kim must have been a different person when she married him.

"Okay."

"Oh, hey, Cindy." Now that they were back, Becky couldn't get Cindy to stop calling all the time.

What the hell... It didn't use to be like this. No. Definitely not. They used to tolerate each other. That's all. What the hell was going on?

took off; about one year after he married Kim. The card said she was selling Amway products in Idaho, something like that.

He told Kim about it that night, and in the morning Becky said she dreamed she saw her mother standing in front of a room full of people, wearing a blue blazer and waving a box of laundry detergent around. Kim nearly choked on her Wheaties. Becky was a genius. She should be in a special school. Blah, blah, blah. Kim didn't understand that kids have crazy imaginations. They sneak out of bed, they eavesdrop, and then they dream about what they hear. End of story.

The stewardess finally appeared and set the drink in front of him. Thank God.

"Kim!" Tom could see her at the end of the corridor. An orderly shot him a nasty glare. Shit. He probably shouldn't be shouting. She saw him and quickly walked toward him. They both had their arms outstretched and then he held her for several minutes before either of them spoke. When she looked up at him, Tom noticed the creases and dark shadows around her eyes.

"We almost lost him today. They said being in a coma was a real strain on his internal organs."

"I thought you said that since he was sixteen, he'd be able to bounce back."

"That's what they said." She pulled a Wet Nap out of her purse, tore the package open, and began to wipe her face with it.

"Where's Becky?" Tom asked.

"She's in with him now." Kim leaned her head back and wiped her neck.

"Do you want to come over? I just got a new sweater."

"No, I'm just going to stay here with Jimmy." Becky twisted her forefinger in the phone cord.

"Okay. I'll call you later."

"Okay." She hung up the phone and went back into Jimmy's room. His eyes were still closed. He must still be sleeping, but she couldn't believe he would sleep so long. She leaned down over his face and listened for his breathing. It was faint, but she could hear it. At least his raccoon eyes had cleared up a little. He looked better. He even looked better than he did when he got home two days ago.

She wished he would wake up so she could put that stuff on his arm. She considered doing it while he was asleep. He always slept with his arm on top of the covers and his palm up anyway. It hurt him if anything touched the wound. No, she better not. Instead, Becky sat down on the floor and rested her head on the mattress. His fingers closed around her hand when she put it in his, but he did not wake up.

"He's coming where?" Tom asked incredulously. Kim looked over the top of her newspaper.

"Here, Tom. He's coming here." Tom shook his head and slammed the package of bacon in his hand onto the counter.

"No, no, no. I don't think so." Bob, that hairy ape, was not coming to stay in his house. He could just hear him now with those stu-



goes down and he flies off.

He does a somersault through the air and he lands on his head and I hear this crack when the helmet hits the ground. That's the only thing I hear in this whole thing is this crack. So, he sits up and there's all this blood pouring out of the helmet. He puts his hand in the blood on his neck and then he starts rubbing it all over his arm." Becky rubbed the inside of her forearm.

"And that's it?"

"Yeah."

Tom hated to fly. He looked at Becky leaning against the window. How could she sleep? It was only two more hours until they got to Sacramento. He could make it if only the stewardess would bring him that drink.

pid card tricks. "I got you, Tom. I got you." [A--hole].

"Have you forgotten that that's his son in there?" Kim pointed toward the hallway.

"Have you forgotten that he's the one who put him on the motorcycle and gave him the kiss of death on both cheeks?" Kim sighed and put the newspaper on the table.

"He's really changed, Tom. You should have seen him in the hospital all those weeks. He's a different person."

"Well, let me ask you this...Is he still doing phone sales for the Socialist Party?" The [stupid] idiot didn't even know what socialism was.

"Yes..." Kim looked confused.

"Then he hasn't changed. He's still an [a--hole.]"

"Don't you think he wants to get another job? It's just that he gets such great benefits."

"Well, he's not staying here, Kim. He can stay in a hotel." Tom ran his hand through his hair.

"He can't afford it."

"You were there, right? In the hospital, I mean." Jimmy looked at Becky. They sat side by side on the front stoop. His brown hair looked almost red out in the sun, but his skin was still chalky.

"Yes...Well, kind of. I was there only a few days." She slid her arm through his and leaned against him.

"You weren't there the whole time?" He leaned back a little so he could see her face.

"No," she said, looking back at him.

"I thought you were."

"No." He had the longest eyelashes of anyone she'd ever seen. She wondered if they shaded his eyes from the sun. And his lips, when he spoke, looked really soft. Why was she always noticing his lips all the time anyway?

"I heard you, though. You kept saying, 'You miss me, Jimmy' and you kept touching my face... if felt kinda cool. Like this." He reached over and ran his hand down the side of her face. She smiled and looked down at her feet.

"I didn't do those things," she said.

"Yes, you did," Jimmy said and put his hand on his cheek where he said Becky touched him.

"No, but I guess I was sort of there. I should tell you about these dreams I had."

"Okay, Tom, cut the deck." Bob sat beside Kim on the couch. Tom had just walked in the door from work.

"I gotta go change," Tom said as he passed through the room. That [loser] had probably been sitting on his couch with his wife all day.

"Could someone please pass the peas?"

If Tom had to ask one more time, he would stab someone with his fork - probably Bob.

"Oh, here you go, Daddy." Becky interrupted her little whispers with Jimmy.

"Thanks, honey." Bob and Kim didn't even notice he had spoken. Kim was too busy laughing, big tears rolling down her cheeks. Bob was too busy making faces and sticking peas up his nose and then taking more and smashing them on his forehead and leaving them there. God, he was intelligent.

"Could we be excused, Dad?" Becky and Jimmy had already stood up.

"Sure." The two of them were more mature than his wife was. Well, more likely, they didn't know what was going on, they were so into each other. They didn't used to be like that, did they?

"Stop it, Bob! My stomach hurts." Kim clutched her middle and bent forward.

"Yes, Bob, stop it. Can't you see you're killing my wife?" Tom knew he'd used a biting tone, but he didn't care. Kim shot him that look. It did get her to stop laughing, though.

"Well, Bob, thanks for making dinner. I'll do the dishes and then we can play cards if you like." Kim got up and began to carry plates to the sink. When she walked behind Bob's chair, she sneered at Tom.

"You want to play, Tom?" Bob asked, pulling the cards out of his shirt pocket. He still had peas on his forehead.

"No thanks."

It was 2:30 am - Tom woke up again. Where the hell was she? Bob had taken her to the grocery store for ice cream three hours ago. Maybe she'd come home, but not to bed yet.

He kicked the covers off and sat up. His slippers scuffed along the hardwood floor until he got to the carpet in the hallway. From the doorway of Becky's bedroom, Tom could see that her bed was still made.

He walked down to Jimmy's room and pushed the door open all the way. Becky and Jimmy both lay on Jimmy's single bed, sleeping in a frontal embrace. What the hell... It didn't used to be like this. No. Definitely not. They used to tolerate each other. That's all. What the hell was going on? He heard Kim laughing in the living room. Did she know about this?

When Tom came around the corner into the living room, he saw Kim giggle and then tap Bob's knee.

"You're so bad," she whispered. They both looked at Tom as he entered the room. Gig-

gling? She was giggling?

"So, did you get your ice cream?"

"Yep, and we ate all of it, too." Kim patted her stomach as she spoke. Oh good, yet another bonding experience.

"Are you aware that our children are sleeping together?"

"Oh, are they?" Kim laughed, brushed Bob's cheek off with the back of two fingers, and said, "You still have Oreo on you."

"Kim?"

"They're fine. They've gotten a lot closer since the accident." She glanced at Bob and then began to fidget.

"Dad, please say 'yes.' I've never been to California, except when we went to the hospital, and I didn't get to see anything. It's not like I'd be missing school, and Kim said she'll pay for it." Kim had lots of money. She had a better job than Daddy did, and he always let



her do things when Kim paid. Becky just knew she would die if she had to spend the summer here with Cindy instead of in California with Jimmy. Bob was kind of dumb but funny sometimes, and he was Jimmy's dad after all. Besides, just because they stayed with him didn't mean they had to spend all of their time with him.

"Fine, go." He looked kind of sad, but it wasn't her fault he had to work. She could write him letters. He'd like that.

"Oh, thank you, Dad! I can't wait to tell Kim and Jimmy I'm going with them."

Tom sat naked at the kitchen table smoking a cigar. He used to do this late at night

after a rough day at work, but now who the hell cared? Sure, it was only six o'clock. There just wasn't anyone around to see. So, [screw] it.

Kim needed "time" and she needed "space." It was over. Besides, if she needed that shit, she wouldn't be living with Bob for the summer. If Tom got another one of those happy letters from Becky saying what a great [f---ing] time they were all having, he would put his head through the wall.

Becky opened her eyes. The soft, red roof overhead glowed softly in the morning sun and it reminded her that she had slept in a tent with Jimmy in the back yard of Bob's house. Bob had suggested it might be fun to sleep out here. It was okay, but, mostly, she just wanted to be alone with him. She looked at him, sleeping next to her. His long eyelashes covered his lower eyelids completely and almost rested on the top of his cheekbones

Have you forgotten that he's the one who put him on that motorcycle and gave him the kiss of death on both cheeks?

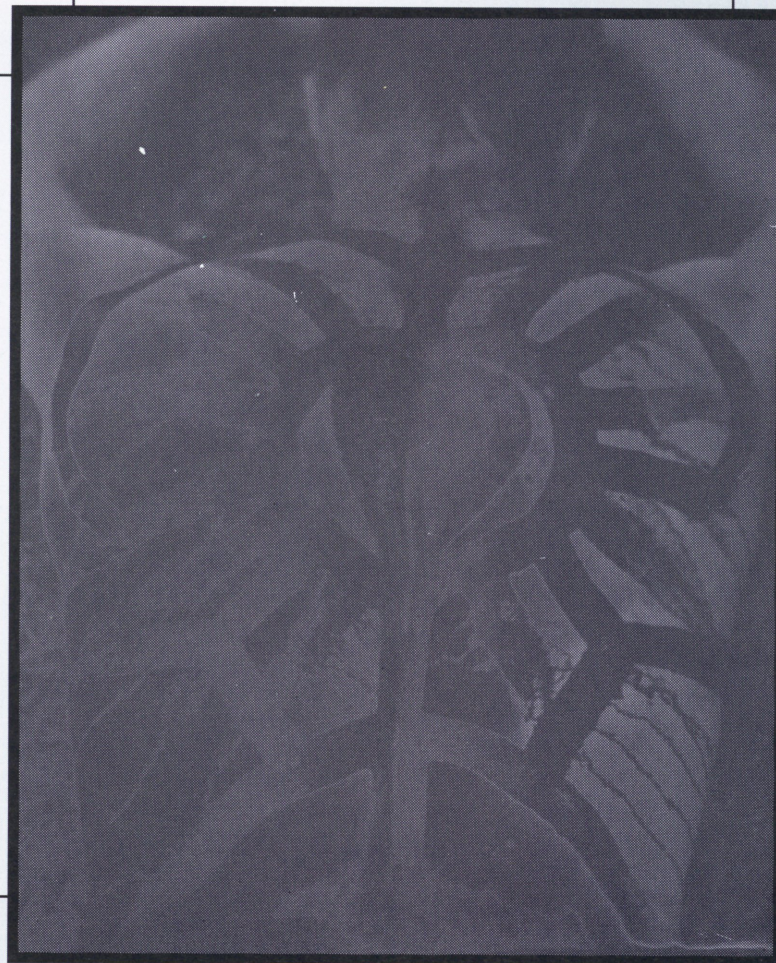
and his bare chest looked so smooth that she wanted to touch it, but she didn't want to wake him up. She still had some thinking to do.

Last night, she had gotten up and gone in the house to go to the bathroom. As soon as she walked in the back door, she heard a screeching sound. She followed the sound and found herself outside of Bob's closed bedroom door. She had never heard that kind of moaning and screaming in her life. There was a pounding that vibrated the floor under her feet.

Becky wasn't stupid. She knew what they were doing, but she had never heard Kim make those kinds of noises at home with her dad. She and Jimmy hadn't done that yet, but if they did, would she make noises like that?

She couldn't decide if she should tell Jimmy about what she heard. There wasn't a question really. She always told him everything.

That stupid dream got to her the most, though. Becky hated it when she dreamed her dad was naked. She felt like such a pervert.



Solarization

Zoe E. Press



PARTS OF THIS STORY WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE TO THE GENERAL AUBURN POPULATION HAVE BEEN EDITED.

Flashback

Description of Happiness in Kobenhavn

Jack Gilbert

All this windless day snow fell
into the King's Garden
where I walked, perfecting and growing old,
abandoning one by one everybody:
randomly in love with the paradise
furnace of my mind. Now I sit in the dark,
dreaming of a marble sun
and its strictness. This
is to tell you I am not coming back.
To tell you instead of my private life
among people who must wrestle their hearts
in order to feel anything, as though it were
unnatural. What I master by day
still lapses in the night. But I go on
with the cargo cult, blindly feeling the snow
come down, learning to flower by tightening.

Fall 1986

Waterford

R.T. Smith

-- County Cavan

Lifted down from the guest parlor's
shelf, Mrs. Lane's pitcher is
light and ice, a gleam

of cut facets
that makes me tremble. Not
the leafy Lismore

pattern, nor Aisling's lotus frond,
it is the simpler Clare,
upswept wheat recalling

the artisan's blown stalk, its bell
of stillness. All
Irish, stressed from fluted rim

to medallion base and sharp
at every edge, it
centers the collection-- Maeve

decanter to the reed-seeming
vase of Kildare-- as if
to whisper: *forget famine,*

assassination, Derry saracens
and the dole: beauty harbors
here. While my hostess fetches tea

from the kitchen, I study
the flawless polish with immigrant
glee and give it

all my reverence for skill
and a pilgrim's mixed envy,
till I hear the kettle's

whistle and the hall
clock gongs four. Almost calm,
but finding I have nicked my

finger on one corner,
I long still, here on the northern
border, for the wintry

clarity of this Irish
vessel, fragile and dazzling
in my trespassing hands.

Winter 1992

Tobacco

Jake Adam York

Old afternoons roasted
slowly, smelling of coffee.
Hours thickened with the aroma

as the sky darkened to a Colombian
brown. In the cafe, men
and women bent over

their papers--still lives
framed in oak panels
and dirty panes. Outside,

dusty men fumed
in the winter air, piping
the cold while the sky

ripened. I unwrapped the blanket
of Earl Grey and cinnamon
and fell into a wash

of February, into pungent
clouds of Sir Walter
Raleigh. In a window, the curve

of an Empire caught my eye,
and a young man, tripping
out of doors, brought

the odor of moldy, nineteenth-
century wool, of silverfish
gnawing the glue from the spines

of fading Testaments. I stopped
before the old tobacco-
skinned Indian, and amid

the heavy air of Havanas
and Tampa Nugget I found
the familiar Old Virginia

Cherry, recalling the brave
smell of my own dead
grandfather.

Spring 1992

Translation

My First Overseas Country

Tomoe Ito

This visit to the United States is the first time I have ever traveled out of Japan. When I arrived at the Atlanta airport and on my way here to Auburn, I was consumed by one thought, "America is very big!" There was nothing at the road sides; I could see trees only. If this was Japan I would see many buildings or houses.

Then I stayed here and talked with many American friends. I thought, "Americans are not interested in Japan, and they don't know about Japan." I was surprised at this fact, because America is associated with Japan in many ways - for example the economy, the American army in Japan, and so on. We know about America, the political structure and pretty much the over-all American situation. However, we know the surface only, and we sometimes have wrong information about America. So we go to foreign countries to find out the truth and to change our own way of looking at things.

In the Japanese mind there is the impression that America is a very dangerous country, but I knew that America would have some safe places. Besides, people here in Auburn are very kind. I like it here. Whenever I meet someone new, they always make a point to speak to me.

初めての海外くオーバンく

伊藤 倫江

ここは、私にとって初めての海外でした。アトランタ空港に着いて、ここに来るまでの間、道路の両脇には木々ばかりで、「アメリカは何で、広いのだろう！」と、思いました。もしここが日本なら、両脇には、建ち並ぶビルや、家々が見えることでしょう。

ここに滞在して、多くのアメリカ人の友人と話し気づいたことは、「アメリカ人は日本に関心がなく、日本について何も知らない。」という事実です。私はとても驚きました。なぜなら、アメリカは、日本と深く係わっているからです。例えば経済、在日アメリカ軍などです。だから私達はアメリカを、アメリカの政治機構、アメリカの状況を知っています。もちろん表面だけです。だから私達はアメリカの情報を得ることもあります。だから私達は海外へ行くのです。真実を知るために、自分の物の見方を変えるために。

日本人の心の中には、「アメリカはとも、危険な国だ」という印象があります。しかし私はアメリカにも安全な場所があることを知りました。ここに住む人は皆、親切だということも。私はここが好きです。出会えば、誰でも声をかけてくれる、このオーバンが。

八月十八日

Exchange

Ashley Wright

When I heard that eighteen Japanese students were coming to Auburn for the summer to learn English, I didn't think much of it; after all, what did they have to do with me? However, my friend Tom, who was writing a story about their stay for *The Auburn Plainsman*, dragged my brother and I to a party they were having to get to know American students. "Hey," we thought, "we don't have anything better to do..besides, it might be interesting."

At the party, I talked with many of the Japanese students; or at least attempted to talk with them. Their English was less than perfect, to say the least, and the problem of social etiquette was considerable. Case in point: the pickled plum. I didn't know whether to spit it out inconspicuously or swallow it with a brave grin. I managed to survive the party, though; in fact, I had a great time.

We decided to "adopt" two of the guys in particular and show them around Auburn, starting with the free movie, *Point of No Return*. At first, I was afraid they wouldn't understand it, but they explained that they watch American movies all the time in Japan, with Japanese subtitles, of course. Besides, they had already seen the French movie *La Femme Nikita*, on which *Point of No Return* is based.

We hit it off so well with Takashi and Tadashi (or "Todd," his "American" name), that we found ourselves doing more and more things with them. It started out as sort of a novelty, I guess; I had never met anyone from Japan before, and teaching them about America and helping them with their English, as well as picking up a few select words in Japanese, was pretty interesting. Eventually, though, it grew into a real friendship.

Takashi and Todd learned many things from us, and we learned a lot from them. But the most important thing we all learned, cheesy as it may sound, is to appreciate one another's culture. Japanese and American students aren't as different as you might think; we spent endless fascinating hours comparing customs and beliefs.

Takashi taught us about the traditional ways of Japan; he was what you might call "old-fashioned." Many of his ideas about society, such as women's rights, would be considered outdated by American standards, but is the norm in Japanese society. Todd, on the other hand, was very "Americanized." He told us that Japan is undergoing many social changes, much as America did not too long ago.

On September 10, 1993, I said goodbye to my new friends as they boarded their plane for Japan. Their American summer came and went too quickly. My sadness at their departure was mixed with warmth as I recalled everything we had done and learned together in the previous weeks.



Portrait
Graphite
Terra Gullet



Under the Arbor

Marian Carcache

*Dedicated with love to three generations of "mamas":
Mama, Mymamma, and Mama Brown.*

In Mama Brown's yard, there were a scuppernong arbor, a lily pond, and a trellis covered with morning glories. Best of all, there was a gazing globe: a shiny metallic silver ball, like a giant Christmas tree ornament mounted on a cement pedestal. The most fun in the world was to stare into the globe and see your face and body distorted a thousand different ways. There were chickens, too, and sometimes, early in the morning, Papa Brown and I would go to the hen house and get eggs for Mattie Belle to cook for breakfast. And in the sun parlour there was a huge player piano with dozens of rolls of music. I can still almost hear the faraway music now. It takes me back to a confused time of innocent wisdom and faith, to a summer when Robert asked Papa Brown for that player piano and Papa Brown said, "Son, when I cross over the bridge, the piano will be yours." A while later, we went to Macon and when we crossed a bridge, Robert reminded Papa Brown that now the piano was his. It also takes me back down a winding dirt road to a house of an old woman named Madame Queen...

I

Going away from home for a whole month, even to Mama Brown's, was a scary prospect that summer that I was ten years old. I woke up early in the morning I was to leave, but lay in bed for a long time, pretending to be asleep, torn between excitement and fear. Finally, Mama got me up. She had laid my seersucker sailor suit on the foot of my bed and it smelled like heat from the iron. As soon as I got dressed, she made me undress to eat breakfast in my slip so I wouldn't get egg down the front of me.

Robert suddenly grabbed me and kissed me smack on the lips, so fast that I hardly had time to react.

After choking down some toast, while my trunk was being put in the car, along with a sack of boiled eggs and pimento cheese sandwiches which we would eat on the way, I went back to my room and told it goodbye. Then I told the yard goodbye and tried to think of something happy so I wouldn't cry.

From the back seat of the car, I watched light poles and mimosa puffs go by. I said silent goodbyes to the church steeple and the STOP*LOOK*LISTEN sign by the railroad track. I put my chin on the back of the front seat and Mama started telling me stories about when she was a little girl in Howard. Mattie Belle had been a young woman then, and had just started working for Mama Brown. Mattie's mama, Sibbie, had worked for Mama Brown before that even. Mama said she used to sneak off to Sibbie's to eat collards with Sibbie's children. She said Mama Brown caught her once and whipped her good. Mama had been missing for hours when they found her sitting in the middle of Sibbie's bed eating the best collards she'd ever tasted out of an old enamel dish. She said that was the second worst whipping she'd ever had; the worst one was when she sneaked off to see Madame Queen, the old negress who, years and years ago, cut hair and told fortunes. This time, Mama said, it was Mattie Belle who

Flashback

caught her and whipped her. She said she knew if she told on Mattie for whipping her, she'd get an even worse whipping from Mama Brown, so she never told. Mama said she hadn't seen or heard anything about Madame Queen in years, and she imagined that she was dead.

Daddy, who had been silent throughout the stories, said we were getting close to the roadside park. Mama reminded him that we needed to buy Cokes before we got to the park; she had forgotten and left the gallon of tea she'd made in the refrigerator. They had made this trip so many times. When I was real little, we spent every weekend in Howard. Then Daddy started working Saturdays and we couldn't go as often. But still I couldn't count how many times I'd ridden this road, and even before I was born, they were already making this trip over and over again. Always the same little store for Cokes when Mama forgot the tea, always the same sandwiches and eggs, in the same roadside park. The same sound of wheels turning on gravel as we turned into Mama Brown and Papa Brown's driveway, the smell of ham frying, or streak o'lean, the warm coolness of a summer evening in Georgia. Then Mama Brown was hugging me and Mama was smoothing the wrinkles out of my seersucker suit and the sleep out of my head. I always seemed to fall asleep the same part of the trip.

That night I slept with Mama Brown. She promised, after the lights were out and she realized that I might be thinking about my own bed at home, that the next day she would let me choose which room I wanted as my own bedroom for the summer. Papa Brown had moved a cot to the screened-in back porch. He said it was "too damn hot to sleep in a house" and Mama Brown frowned at him.

I lay awake beside Mama Brown, homesick. She looked different without her glasses. I could hear crickets chirping from out by the lily pond and could smell the honeysuckle that had wrapped itself around the poles of the scuppernong arbor outside the window. It must have been after midnight. Mama and Daddy had stayed for a giant supper of breakfast food, and then we had waited up for them to call and say they had gotten safely home. Now the house was dark and quiet, except for the hollow-ticking mantel clock that echoed through every room, but the outside had come to life with hoots and howls, and chirps and croaks, and the sound of stars bursting.

II

The next morning, I ran out to meet Mattie's daughter, Annie, when she came to pick up the dirty clothes for Mattie to wash. I had known Annie all my life. When I was little, Mama Brown used to give her a quarter to entertain me when we visited for the weekend. They would run a rope through one end of a big cardboard box, usually one that Tide came packed in to Uncle Ed's store, and Annie would pull me in it, up and down the ditches that ran along the road in front of Mama Brown's house. When I got older, we made necklaces out of chinaberries or hats out of mimosa puffs. Back then, Annie always had a fun idea, but she didn't seem interested in things like that anymore. She talked to me a little, but soon disappeared down the road carrying the bundle of dirty clothes on her head. I felt empty

and sad as I went inside the house to find something to do.

Mama Brown promised me a playmate soon, a distant cousin I didn't even remember. She said we'd played together as babies, but that his family had moved away while I was still little. Now, though, they had just moved back to Howard after all these years.

The rest of the day I entertained myself, wishing I'd just stayed home for the summer. I made faces in the gazing globe for a while, and later made a secret hiding place deep within the scuppernong arbor. That afternoon, I climbed a big oak tree and realized that, from its top, I could see Mattie's yard. She was standing over a big washpot, stirring clothes. Some of our clothes already hung on her fence and clotheslines. I recognized Mama Brown's apron and my own sailor suit.

I could see Annie and her sister Duck, who was said to be crazy, taking turns scrubbing on a washboard and hanging the clothes out to dry. Several other children were chasing chickens around the swept yard. I felt lonely and homesick, and wished for a moment that I could be one of Annie's sisters for the afternoon.

Bored with the treetop perch, I slid down the rough old tree trunk and went back to play under the arbor. Lying back in the shadiest tangle of vines there, I closed my eyes and blanked my mind until my shorts and sneakers turned into a pink satin dress and clear glass slippers, and I was singing to the troops overseas. And then suddenly I realized I wasn't alone under the arbor.

The boy who was watching me appeared to be about my age, or maybe a year or so older. He wore plaid bermuda shorts, pale blue socks, and sunglasses. His dark hair was combed down in bangs on one side.

"Who are you?" I asked, embarrassed and agry to have been caught entertaining the troops.

"My name is Robert Patterson Lee and I suppose you're Hallelujah," he answered precisely, ruling out my plan to tell him that I was somebody important, or, at least, famous.

I nodded, sitting up.

"Would you like to see my new bicycle?" he asked, adding, "It doesn't have a basket yet, but it's purple. Probably the only purple bike in the state of Georgia. I got it for my fifteenth birthday."

I knew he was lying. He couldn't be a day over eleven, but I just said, "Sure. Will you let me have a ride?"

"If you'll follow the rules," he answered, pulling his sunglasses down his nose a little

and looking at me with even brown eyes.

When I asked, "Whose rules?" he answered, "Mine," and headed toward the bike. I hesitated, didn't answer, but then followed him out of the arbor.

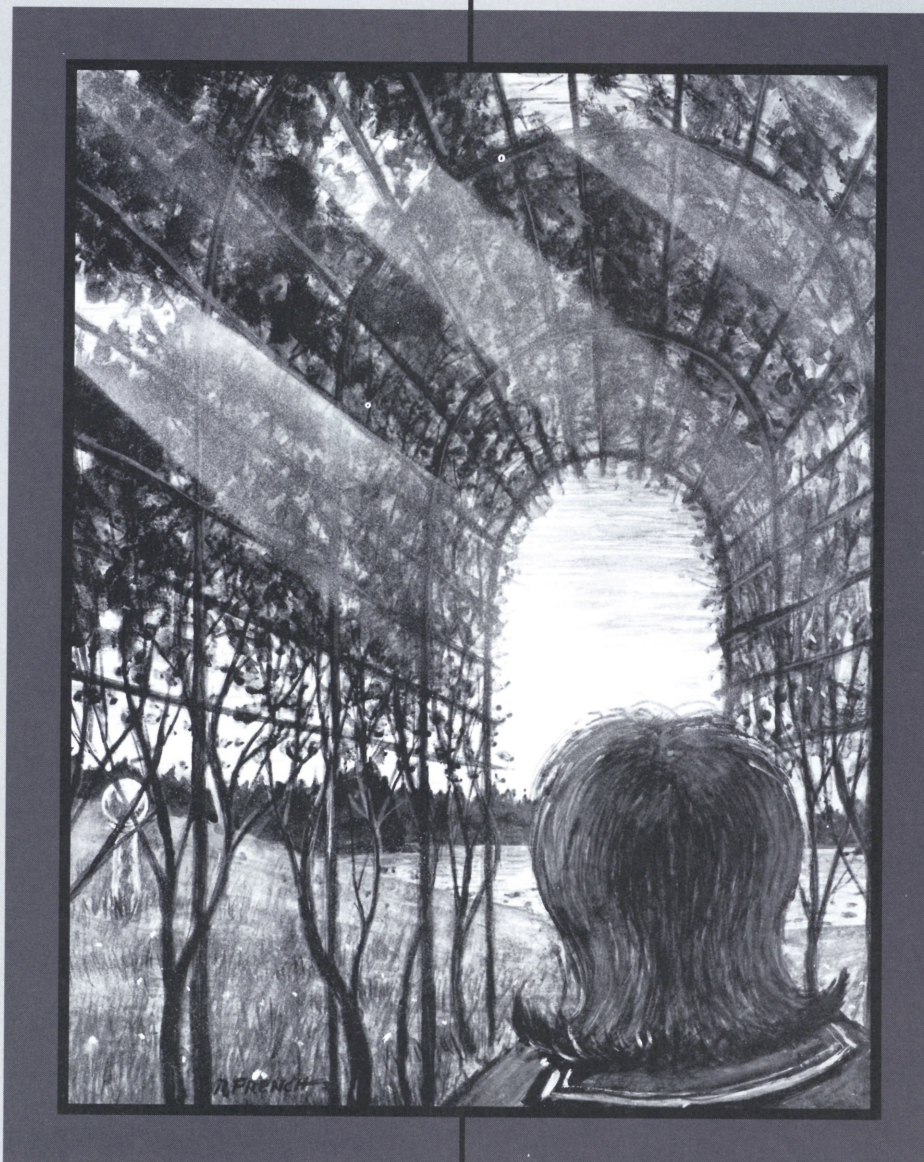
III

Robert Patterson Lee, according to Mama Brown, had turned eleven last winter and never had been anyone but "Bobby Lee" to her recollection. But he and I made a private deal. I would call him Robert, and he would take glamour photos of me with the Kodak he had gotten for Christmas. He wanted to direct movies, it turned out, as much as I wanted to star in them. We had other important things in common, too. We were both only

children, both born in February, both made straight A's in school, both read *Photoplay* magazine in secret, and both had found the magical world of make-believe inside the arbor.

We took turns riding the purple bike the rest of the afternoon: up and down the driveway, through the trellis, under the porte-cochere. After Robert renamed the driveway the Pathway of Righteousness because it was straight and narrow and the trellis the Treacherous Trail of Temptation, because the thorns on the rose vines would grab at our ankles and elbows when we rode through, he told me that his other main ambition, besides

Continued on next page.



Continued from previous page.

directing movies, was to be a Methodist preacher. He named the porte-cochere the Gateway to Salvation because when we went under and came out the other side, it was like finding the Light. We got saved from sin over and over for the rest of the afternoon.

I slept hard that night, and though I still felt a dull ache of homesickness when I thought about Mama and Daddy, I spent more time thinking about Robert, and then when I fell asleep, I dreamed about him too.

When Annie came the next morning to bring the clean, ironed clothes, Robert and I had already started the photography session, but I broke a Marilyn Monroe pose to invite her to join the session. She looked awfully tempted, but announced that she didn't have time, that she had to go home and get ready for a date that night.

My mouth fell open, speechless. Annie dating! I could hardly believe my ears. I wondered if Mama Brown knew. Robert was determined not to show his surprise, but I knew that behind those sunglasses, his eyes must be as big as saucers.

"But Annie, who's the date with?" I asked, not even trying to hide my amazement.

"Junior Perry," she answered proudly. "He got a car and job pulpwoodin' for Mr. Wayne Morris, and he twenty-four years old."

Pleased with the reaction she had gotten from us, Annie said "bye" and left, passing through the porte-cochere, grinning down the driveway. When she was out of sight, Robert spoke first. He told me that his Mama was taking him to Macon shopping the next day, and he wouldn't see me again until Sunday at church. He left soon, too, promising that we would "resume picture-taking on Monday, Sunday being the Sabbath."

IV

I awakened Saturday morning to the sound of bacon sizzling in a hot skillet, egg shells cracking against the rim of a milk-glass bowl, and then the contents mingling with a whirl from Mama Brown's egg beater, now in the deft hands of Mattie. The kitchen smells of chicory coffee brewing and biscuits browning in the oven accompanied the culinary sounds that roused me from the feather mattress, thick and soft as a cloud.

Papa Brown read the morning paper from Atlanta while he ate, a habit that didn't please Mama Brown at all. She said he didn't even know what he'd eaten. When he finished his breakfast, he still had half the paper to go while he smoked a cigar and drank another

cup of coffee. Mama Brown was busy getting ready to go to some kind of sewing circle, but told me I'd get a surprise when she came home.

I waited my chance to ask Mattie about Annie's date. Something told me Mama Brown wouldn't approve of a thirteen-year-old girl going on a date, and that if she knew, she wouldn't let Annie be my playmate anymore.

When Papa Brown finally finished the newspaper and left the kitchen, and I mentioned Annie's date to Mattie, she just frowned and grunted, "Annie too warm for her age."

"But did she have a good time?" I persisted, but Mattie just answered, "I hope she didn't have too good a time." Before I could



continue, she cut me short with "that June Perry's a workless black devil" and went out the door, slamming the screen behind her, to rake the breakfast scraps into the slop bucket for Uncle Ed's hogs.

I noticed for the first time as Mattie went out the door that she moved with more effort, and that around the edges of her head rag, gray hair was beginning to show.

Annie didn't come over at all that day, and with Robert gone, there wasn't much to do. I made faces in the silver gazing globe and saw myself in a thousand distorted forms. I stared into the lily pond, saw huge waterlilies growing out of the reflection of my face, then saw the image waver as tiny tadpoles rippled through it. It seemed that the only place I could go to escape my own reflection was under the arbor.

Honeysuckle had woven itself in at the back end of the arbor, and luckily, being at the far end, it had escaped Papa Brown's at-

tention and grown thick. The scuppernongs and honeysuckle blooms mixed to create a sweet perfume and the tiny bees that buzzed around the harbor lulled me away to exotic places. I closed my eyes and saw kaleidoscopic designs: circles, diamonds, squares that burst into explosions of color. Then I was in Egypt. Cleopatra on the Nile, eating the scuppernongs that slaves fed me while my barge drifted, drifted.

It was the sound of my own name that brought me back from Egypt. Mattie was calling me, probably to lunch. At the very moment that I realized Mattie had rounded the corner of the house and was nearer to the arbor than the porch, I remembered Mama Brown saying to stay out of the arbor because it was "snaky" under there. I knew Mattie would tell if she caught me, so I kept quiet until I heard the screen door slam. Then I ran all the way to the front yard, around the house, into the kitchen - then, out of breath, I asked Mattie if she had called me.

She seemed distracted. She never even asked me where I'd been, just handed me a sandwich and a glass of tea and told me I could eat outside if I wanted to. I picked at the brown crusts of the bread and mashed the sandwich till egg salad oozed out the edges. I was glad Mattie hadn't asked where I'd been, but at the same time, disappointed that she hadn't seemed to care.

Within moments after Mama Brown got home, I was standing on the vanity seat, my arms out to the sides, while Mama Brown gave instructions through pins she held in her teeth - "straighten up," "hold your arms straight," "put 'em back down," and most of all, "quit squirming and be still and quit before I end up stickin' you." Between orders, she explained that she had cut out this "little church dress" for me to wear the next morning to Sunday School. Since Howard had circuit preachers, the Baptist and Methodist congregations alternated churches every other Sunday, and since we would be visiting the Baptist church, she wanted me to look especially nice. Besides, she added, we had been invited to stay for "dinner on the ground" after the service.

V

Baptist Sunday School was a new experience for me. Back home, Sunday School at the Methodist church consisted of reading some stories about foreign children who have

Flash

never had a stomach full of food, giving a quarter to help buy them some rice, and then praying the Lord's

Prayer to make sure we kept getting our daily bread.

But here in Howard, in Baptist Sunday School, everybody had to get up and say a Bible verse and then answer questions about Bible stories. I felt stupid because I didn't know any answers. On top of that, I stuck out, being new and being dressed better than anybody else, except Robert, of course.

Robert looked and acted just like a preacher. He had on a blue suit and a tie, and his hair was parted on the side with the bangs slicked back - just like a preacher. He even had a somber, rejected look on his face, like preachers get, and he held his Bible open on his knees. I realized that, on Sundays, Robert left his dark glasses at home.

I felt sicker and sicker as the Sunday School class wore on, never knowing what they had lined up to call on me for next. The ultimate horror came when Miss Nell, the teacher, announced that we would end our class by joining hands to make a circle, and then each person would say a few words to the Lord.

The musty smell of closed rooms and old songbooks and chalk began to close in and suffocate me. My ears were ringing, but muffled and faraway-sounding, I could hear somebody playing "The Old Rugged Cross" in the sanctuary. Then I saw Jesus' face, shining and beautiful, like a girl's almost, and then I saw Him on the cross, and saw myself running barefooted across the hot sand, heard myself crying out to Him that I loved Him. Jesus smiled and took my hand, and then I realized that it wasn't Jesus squeezing my hand at all - it was Robert signaling me that it was my turn to pray aloud. I also realized that it hadn't been me talking to Jesus on the cross, but Robert, praying his part in the circular prayer.

There was a long, heavy silence before Miss Nell took my turn in prayer. I wanted to run out of that awful Sunday School room as fast as I could, and was about to when Robert grabbed my arm and whispered that Miss Nell went first. She signaled to the piano player, who began to play "Onward Christian Soldiers" as we marched single-file down the aisle to the front pew, where we suddenly became "the Youth Choir."

Other than having to stand up and be pointed out as "Mr. and Mrs. Brown's little granddaughter, Hallie," and having to pretend to sing some dumb song I didn't know about Jacob's Ladder, while faking finger motions, the church service wasn't nearly the

nightmare that Sunday School had been. And dinner-on-the-ground made the earlier part of the day worth the humiliation. At least thirty women must have gotten up early that Sunday morning to fry chickens golden brown. Other delicacies, slid carefully out of brown paper bags turned sideways, included potato souffles, full of fat raisins and covered with melted marshmallows; any and every conceivable variation on potato salad; butterbeans and peas, flavored with hunks of fresh ham hock; fresh turnip greens, cooked with white roots; and pones of cornbread, bulging with crisp, hot cracklings that had been hoarded in a cool, dry place since fall. For dessert, there were cobblers and cakes, and three freezers of peach ice cream. Someone even discovered half-a-dozen watermelons floating in the eerie baptismal pool, though no one took credit for the blasphemous deed.

Children played hide-and-seek in the graveyard while adults talked and sang until almost dark, sitting on patchwork quilts or

tually, the man lost his balance, struggled, and drowned. Regardless of what Robert said, I was anxious to get away from the sand pits.

Another day we rode to the Negro quarter to see Annie, who hadn't seemed to have time for us since June Perry started paying her attention. The red clay road to Mattie's house seemed to smoke orange beneath the wheels of Robert's bicycle. And by the time we got to Mattie's yard, the purple bike was orange. In the yard, bony chickens pecked at the ground and skinny dogs scratched fleas. Several children played in the shade under the front porch, while on the porch, Duck plaited another girl's hair.

Annie wasn't home. Duck told us she'd gone to town with June. Then Duck's attention turned to giving us watermelon from Mattie's patch. Duck didn't seem crazy to me, just a little single-minded, but there were lots of stories about strange things she'd done. Some people were scared of her, but Mama Brown said she was "harmless enough."

When we left Mattie's yard, we had a giant watermelon in the basket of the bike, and Robert said we should take it down to the river, find a secret place there, a place to leave it anchored in the cool water. Then, he said, we could come back the next day, during the heat of the afternoon, and find our watermelon, cool and juicy, waiting just for us. Robert pushed the bike, holding the watermelon on the basket, and we crossed the bumpy field to find the path that led down to the water.

The tangled briars cut my ankles and the dry stubble cut my bare feet, but Robert grabbed my arm and pulled me onward when I complained. Another Treacherous Trail, I thought. Crickets jumped through the grass, making popping noises, and bees competed with butterflies for pollen. I felt like Maureen O'Hara being dragged through a field by John Wayne in a movie I saw once at the Rialto in Columbus.

Soon we could feel a cool dampness and we knew we were near the water. As we started down the hill to the river, the brown broken grass and white beaming sun gave way to wild purple violets and green vines and moist shadiness. Robert took the watermelon off the basket and left the bike against a tree. Going downhill with the heavy watermelon was no easy job. Robert had to dig his toes in the ground to keep from running against his will. I ran ahead laughing, stretching both arms out beside me to keep my balance. I had to grab scrubby shrubs here and there to keep from running, out of control, into the river.

Once we were beside the water, Robert contrived a way to secure the watermelon in

**"Who are you?" I asked.
"My name is Robert
Patterson Lee and I suppose
you're Hallelujah."**

in folding chairs, under the shade trees in the churchyard.

I missed home that day, but I had to admit that the first week in Howard had been memorable, even fun. I wondered if the rest of the month would pass quickly.

VI

Robert got a basket for his bicycle in Macon, and we spent our days after that, me straddled the fender, holding on for dear life, riding down dirt roads and across pastures, filling the basket with treasures to be displayed in a Natural History Museum that we planned to open under the porte-cochere: abandoned bird nests, abandoned snail shells, even an occasional abandoned rabbit tail or cow skull. The museum was soon abandoned, too. Mattie said it gave her the creeps the way we rode up every day with "dead things and the stuff they left behind." She told Mama Brown we were drawing green flies under the porte-cochere and that she wouldn't be surprised if the buzzards were to follow, so we put the treasures that would fit in a shoe box and hid them under the house.

One day, when we were sure he wouldn't be there, we went to Papa Brown's sand pits and Robert showed me the quicksand that a Negro man had fallen in and drowned. He explained that most people believed that quicksand pulled a body under, but that, ac-

Continued on page 60.

Gallery



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
Opel Blunderbust



Untitled
Watercolor
Chris Neal



Untitled
Acrylic
Chris Neal

Untitled
Water Color
Patrick Espy



Untitled
Oil
Patrick Espy





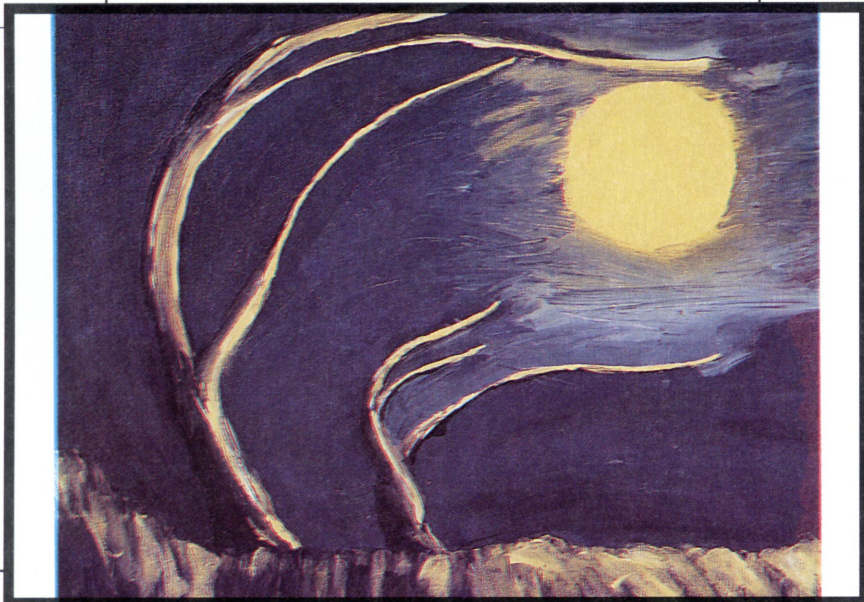
Untitled
Terra Gullet



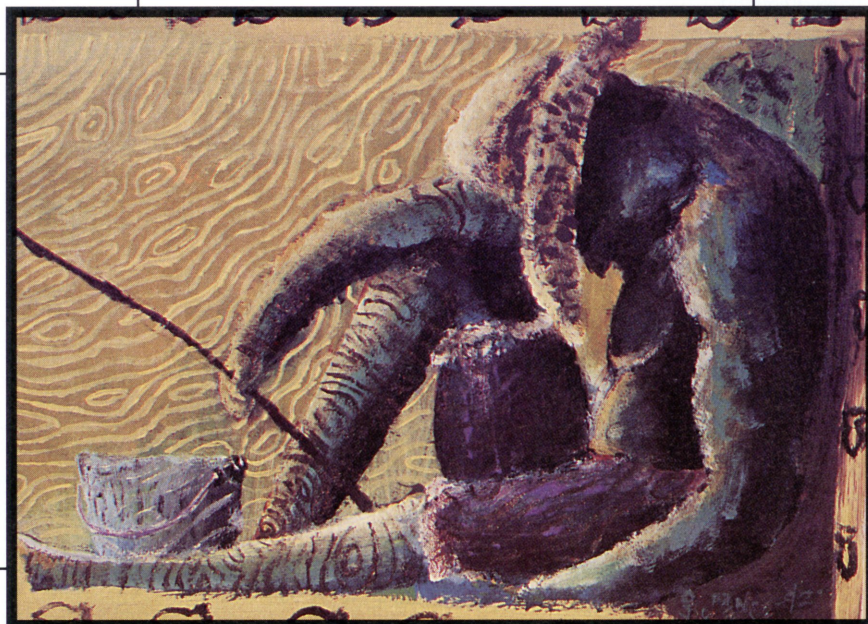
Untitled
Ink, watercolor on wood
Chris Neal



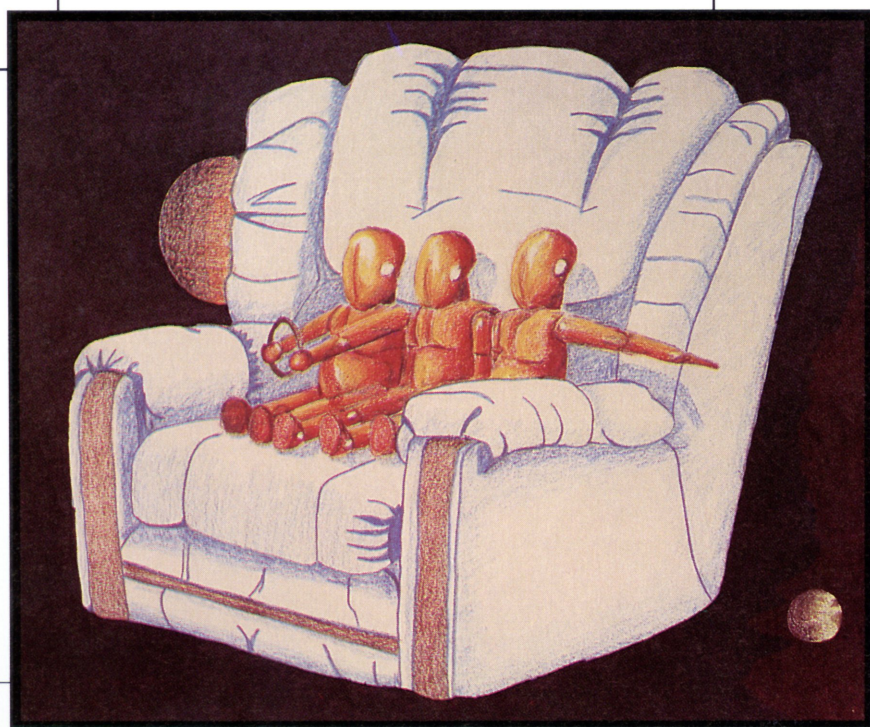
Untitled
Oil
Anonymous



Splendor
Acrylic
Cam Wales



Untitled
Oil
Torrence Webster



Untitled
Color pencil and ink
Torrence Webster



Untitled
Water Color
Mohammed Dolatobadi

One Down

Marguerite Majilton Rhodes

The goldfish floats
in the Red Sea;
Its belly kisses
the stale air.

I call for help
and listen to tears;
The phone disconnects us.

The rabbit quivers
and runs
in zigzagged circles
circles

circles;
Its heart,
a madman's toy drum.

I wish for
a dreamless coma that lasts
until the Second Coming.

The blackbird beats
its wings against
the porch's screen wires
and flies faster and harder,
in all directions at once.

My bones tell me
He is coming;
I breathe needles.

In Name Only

Kathy Flann

Kate married my dad
From the House of the Rising Sun
Plastic ferns, go-go boots.
I had never seen my own mother

Climb a tree
Or wear sleeveless shirts
Mom was nearly blind

Without Coke-bottle glasses,
And remembered the Coasters,
Remembered turquoise Edsels
With teepee fins,

And silver steering wheels
But, this one whistled and
Threw away Wheat Germ,

Ate scrambled eggs with catsup.
The blondest of my dad's other children
Captured part of my face.
When I hear the child's small voice

Competing with the bark
Of neighborhood dogs at dusk,
It is Mom that I hear

Though I should not
Should not,

But the voice is green paint
Chipping off a picnic table
Revealing wood I've seen
Gray and soggy with rain.

For my sister,
Kate is only one
Who makes beds and braids hair.

For me, she is the other mother.
She is the one at the top
Of the highest pine
Laughing that she can't get down.

Breaking Trees

Jennifer Dickey

"If I could break you

I could break a tree." - *Hilda Doolittle*

I imagine getting that scrawled across a postcard, without a signature and with no clue who sent it. Imagine what you'd think. I showed it to Joe, someone I used to be romantically involved with and who, to the surprise of both of us, I still found myself "involved" with. We were working on the friend thing.

"What do you think it means?" I handed it to him. He was sitting on my unmade bed, looking through a magazine. He put it down and looked at the postcard.

"Not sure. What do you think? Surely you must know what it could be about. Some kind of private joke or something." He examined the handwriting, then the postmark. "Postmark is here in town."

"I don't know whether to feel ashamed or honored. Personally, I feel a bit stalked." I watched him look over the postcard, and turn it over. It was an old postcard that the sender could have bought in an antique store or possibly found in an older relative's things.

"Have you been watching those made-for-t.v. movies again?" He laughed and pulled me over to him. "Some guy probably wants you or something. Some long-hair poet that I know you secretly want yourself."

"Yeah, right." I laid my head on his stomach, breathing in his familiar scent of Tide and cigarettes.

The mess Joe and I created with the unseasonal fall of snow in the front yard intrigued me tonight, with the streetlamp shining down on the lumps of snow, here and there sprayspainted green, from the "snow woman's" green dress that we were trying to achieve. Joe made the snow woman's breasts while I had stood back, complaining that he was making them too big for her frame.

"She won't be able to jog, baby," I told him.

"Stop."



"I don't know, you're having much too good of a time doing that..." I watched him cup both of his hands around the snow woman's full breasts, his hands smoothing out any flaws. He kept adding more snow and later, sure enough, I was right, those monsters were indeed too big for her frame, and she toppled over. Face first. Or rather, breasts first.

Joe's going. On a bus of all things. He's not too sure of where exactly he's going either.

"See what too much of a good thing is?" I smiled and took the shovel and chopped down what remained of our snow queen.

He left soon after, his brown and orange Tootsie Roll cap hanging loosely off his head of brown, shaggy hair. He needed a hair cut, but I wasn't about to tell him. He had a bad habit of going from one extreme to the other. He would show up close to bald if I told him to get a trim.

"You look like a member of Fat Albert's gang." I pulled his knit cap tighter on his head and patted his reddening cheeks. "Or like that little Dutch Boy with from the paintcans with these."

I watched him walk down the street to his apartment, which was relatively close by. The snow was already beginning to melt.

He wanted to go on a trip. A road trip. Alone. I remember a time when I used to want to go on trips with him. That yearning was halted rather sharply the day I did go on a trip with him— to Birmingham, to see the Vulcan. It was my idea. The entire way there I flipped through magazines and watched the roadside go by in a green and grey blur after failing to engage him in anything that vaguely resembled a conversation.

Then, when we finally arrived at the Vulcan we couldn't agree on whether to climb the stairs or ride the elevator to the top. Joe began a long discourse on why he could not possibly trust an elevator in a place like that, and haven't I ever seen the elevator scenes in "The Towering Inferno?" I refused to climb the stairs with him and took the elevator to the top, where I enjoyed a good ten minutes by myself, looking over Birmingham. Joe finally emerged, looking a bit flushed but seemed to be in a surprisingly good mood for someone who had just climbed all that way. He put his arms around my waist and leaned his head on my shoulder.

"Why are nuns called nuns?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Cause they don't get none," he answered in monotone voice.

I squeezed his hand. "Really, Joe."



Runner Up

"Saw that written on the stairwell. See what you miss when you take elevators."

But yes, Joe had decided to go on a trip. Alone, he said, so he could think. Usually his pre-departure talk included a lot of mumbling of Jack Kerouac's adventures on the open road and how a person really couldn't do that anymore. Not really. Or how he wanted to go to Maine, where great shoes and novels were produced. Joe never went far on these excursions, but I suspected that he was testing the waters, and one day, his family and I would look for him, and he would be gone, good Maine shoes and all.

Joe's going. On a bus of all things. He's not too sure of where exactly he's going either. I took him to the bus station, against my better judgement.

"Why don't you take your car again?"

"Nope. It's acting funny."

"Acting funny? How's it acting funny?" I was wearing his coat. I pulled it tighter.

"Like someone's been messing with it...I don't know...." He was already far away from me in his head. Distracted, he pulled at his hair. "I must seem to be getting awfully boring and paranoid to you."

"Take my car, Joe. I'd feel better."

Joe stood there a moment, actually looking like he was considering it. He looked over at a young boy who was standing near us, leaning against the wall. He had been eavesdropping on us since we had arrived. I hadn't minded. Joe did.

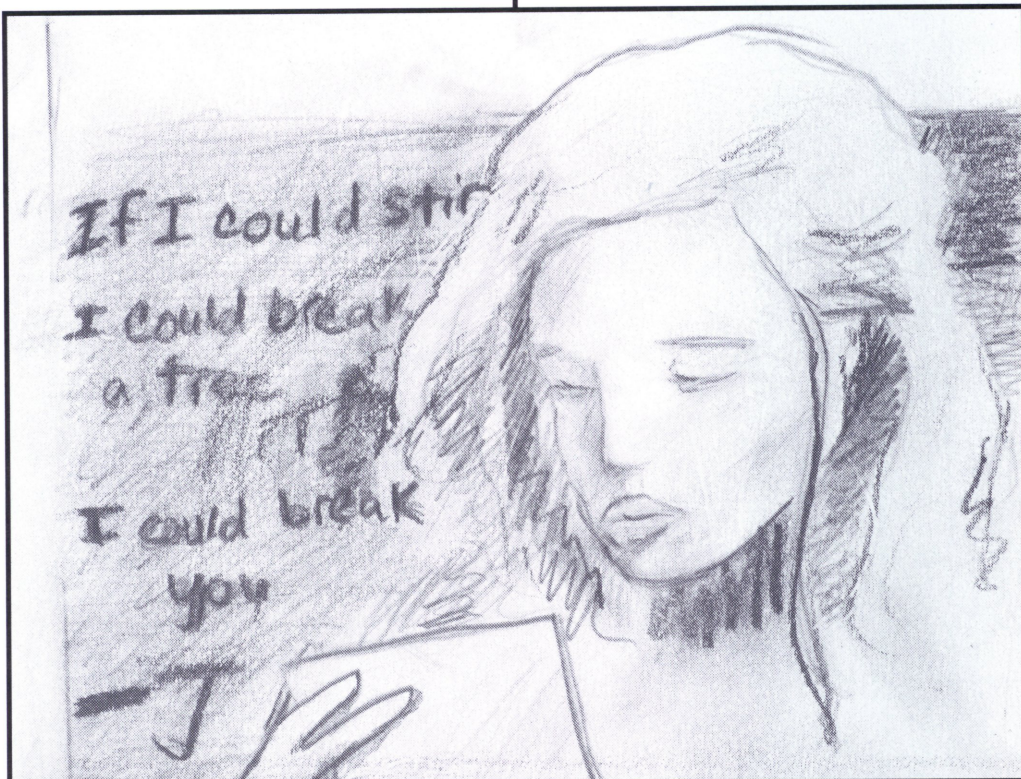
"Could you please stop listening to us, boy. Please."

The young boy, who looked about fifteen, moved across the room to an orange chair next to the Coke machine. He lit a cigarette, after packing his cigarettes while he gave Joe and me a disdainful look.

"So, will you forget this bus nonsense and take my car? My grandmother had to take the bus once and almost got mugged."

He laughed at this and said, "No. You need your car. I'll be back soon. I'll send a card or something."

"Joe, I don't think you are being very fair about this. People need to know where other people are and when they are coming back." He was aggravating me now. The boy in the



orange chair started hassling a boy younger than himself to move from his view of the window. The younger boy was holding a paper sack in one hand and an Atlanta Braves cap in the other.

"You worry too much." He looked at me. There was a long pause. While he tried to get me to look back at him I watched the boy in the baseball cap. He was crying. I looked to see if the older boy had done something to him. He didn't seem to be interested in us or the little boy anymore. He was ogling a woman in a tube top who had just come into the bus station. She was applying unneeded lipstick.

Joe continued. "You know, we need more friends. Both of us. We tend to distance ourselves much too far away from others. We have a serious problem, I think."

Jesus. He was getting philosophical when all I was trying to do was to get him to use a vehicle for his road trip that didn't have an enormous dog painted in a frozen leap on the side of it.

"I don't think that's a problem, if you ask me. Besides, you're the one distancing yourself from things, if you want to know the truth."

He smiled at me like one might smile at a child and kissed my forehead. "I'll bring you back a keychain."

I collected keychains.

Got a postcard the other day. Postmarked Maine.

Dearest YOU:

Bought myself more shoes. Have keychain will travel.

Thought I saw Stephen King at the A&P in the frozen food section. Fishstick area, I believe.

P.S. Is it okay to say I want to touch you?

P.S.S. Found out where that mystery "man" found that not so funny line about trees. "If I could break you..." Remember?

It continues.

"If I could stir I could break a tree. I could break you."

-J

I put his postcard on top of the other one. "If I could stir," I said aloud. "If I could stir."

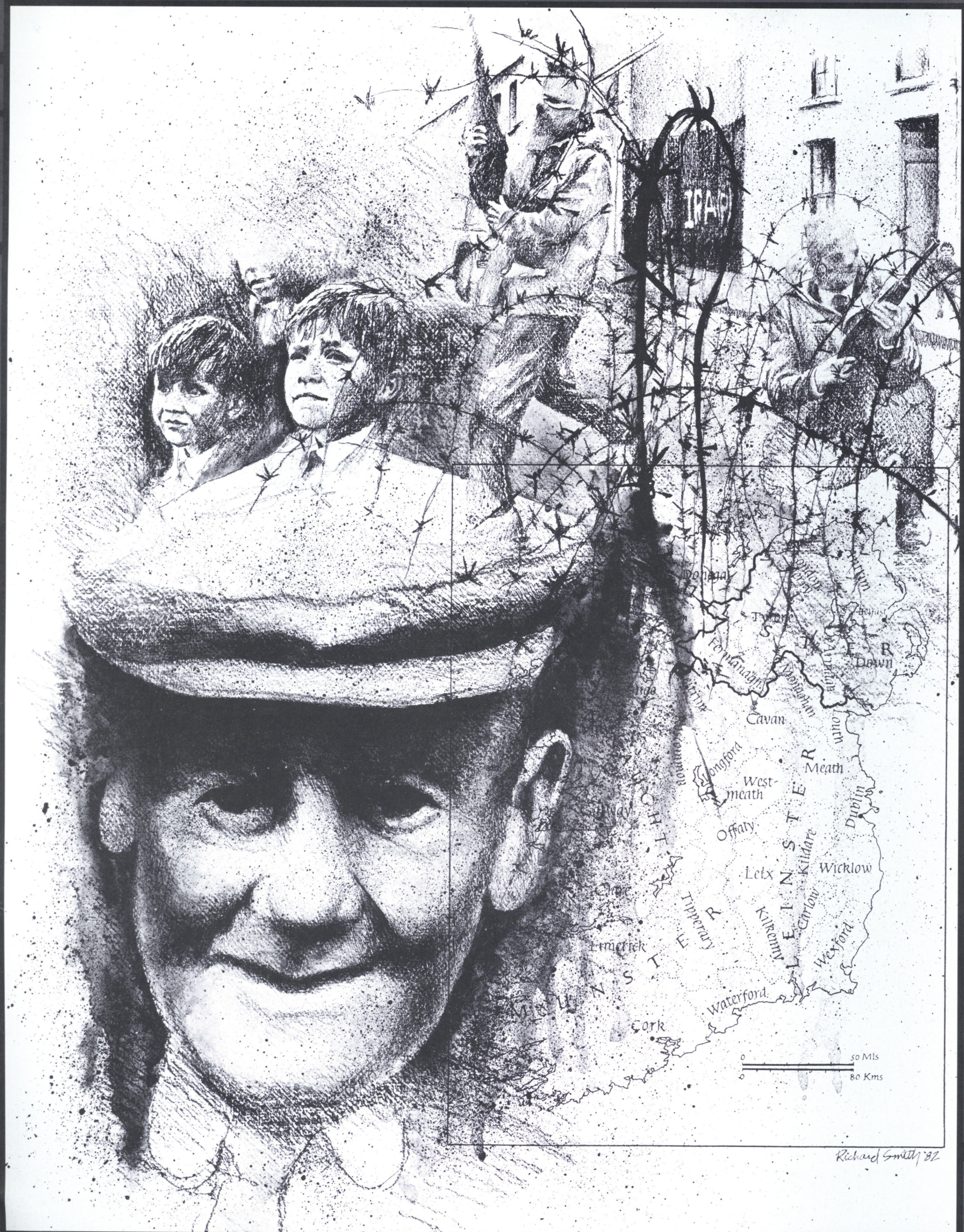


Flashback



Stephanie Says She's Naked But She Ain't

Mike Goodson
Winter 1993



Richard Smith '82

Richard Smith
Winter 1982

Creation of a Color-Blind Society

Laura Palmer

Michael Whittington breathed a sigh of relief as he closed the door to the administrator's office. His interview had gone successfully, and the future seemed promising. The six years of strenuous work and dedication to college and graduate school was finally going to pay off, and all he could think of was his wife's anticipation of their new baby, and her hopes that he would be offered the job. After a few weeks, he eagerly tore open a company-stamped envelope only to read the burning words of a letter extending sympathy and regret that he would not be included in the next level of consideration for the job. Later, he was unofficially informed that the reason he did not qualify for the job was because he wasn't a minority, and the administrator was made to fill the quota with members of a minority. Though this is a hypothetical situation, in reality, it occurs all of the time.

In another situation, according to Stanley Fish, writer for *The Atlantic Monthly*, in 1991, the ABC Program "Prime Time Live" filmed a black man and white man of equal education, cultural sophistication, and level of apparent affluence around the city of St. Louis, where neither was known (135). In many encounters, the black man was treated with contempt while the white man was helped with great willingness. For example, the black man was asked to come up with a larger down payment on the same car as the white man and turned away as a prospective tenant (Fish 135). Can one instance of racial discrimination be justified and more easily accepted than another?

Affirmative action was originally set up to solve the problem of racial discrimination when blacks were not hired for jobs even if they were qualified. Many people agree that the quotas were necessary in order to enable African Americans and other minority groups to be in the work force. However, history tells us something different. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was being designed by Congress, terminology was carefully chosen to avoid being misinterpreted. For example, Title VII began by forbidding any employer to "limit, segregate, or classify his employees in any way which would deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin," ended by saying:

"Nothing contained in this title shall be interpreted to require any employer... to grant preferential treatment to any individual or to any group because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin of such individual or group on account to an imbalance..." because many law makers at the time feared the act could be used to justify reverse discrimination, or racial quotas in hiring (Taylor 126). Senator Hubert Humphrey, a strong supporter of the bill, said, "Title VII does not require an employer to achieve any sort of racial balance in his work force by giving preferential treatment of any individual or group," according to Jared Taylor, author of the book *Paved With Good Intentions* (126). Humphrey even promised to eat the paper the bill was written on if it was ever used to issue corrective hiring purposes. However, in order to ensure that no one of a minority group was discriminated against, color-blind hiring rules were established in the

Executive Order 11246 by President Johnson shortly after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. This order states that "the contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin" (126). This does not say that affirmative action "with racial quotas" should be used as the solution to racial discrimination.

However, in the "Philadelphia Plan," instituted by the Department of Labor during the Nixon Administration 1969, "government contractors in that city were forced to employ a certain number of nonwhites through race-conscious hiring schemes when private employers noticed that absence of discrimination was not enough" (Taylor 126). Soon this affirmative action strategy spread all over the country and came to include almost every employer.

Many people today feel that his plan was and is the only way to open doors for the minority groups, especially the African Americans, who were oppressed by slavery many years ago; how-

ever, in reality, it closes doors for both whites and blacks. Imagine, if you can, that you are a carpenter who needs to hire some people to hammer nails; however, there is a law that requires you to hire five green people. Of the five, three are qualified, but you must hire the other two as well to fill your obligation. How are you going to feel about green people? Aren't you going to be frustrated and even resentful towards them because you are unable to get your job done effectively? In addition, you're probably going to draw the conclusion that some green people can't hammer. This same scenario can be applied to any group of people whether it's African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, or any other group. In this way, affirmative action may increase prejudice or cause it if it didn't already exist and, thus, close doors on members of certain groups.

We must also question the idea that if no person is to be regarded as unequal or separate from another person, then how can blacks and other minorities avoid thinking of themselves as a separate people when society treats them as a separate people? If blacks get favors because they are black, it encourages them to think of themselves neither as individuals, nor as Americans, but as blacks (Taylor 357). Even with the abilities and opportunities available, how can blacks be expected to believe in ability and hard work when society rewards them for being black instead? Booker T. Washington, a former slave who founded Tuskegee Institute, could not have stated it more eloquently when he said, as quoted by Jarod Tayler:

"No greater injury can be done to any youth that to this or that race he will be advanced regardless of his own merit or efforts (357)."

We must acknowledge the fact that prejudice in some shape or form will always exist; however, we must also realize that law does not say that there is prohibition "against discrimination by race, creed, color, sex, or national origin unless one race tries to be superior over another by treating the race as if it were inferior to the other." A society that doesn't encourage prejudice in any form is essential. The only way to form an unbiased society is to have color-blind laws. There

How can blacks and other minorities avoid thinking of themselves as separate people when society treats them as separate people?

He was unofficially informed that the reason he did not qualify for the job was because he wasn't a minority.

will always be people who break such laws, just as there will always be people who break any other laws. Laws certainly won't change the people who commit the crimes, whether the crime is prejudice or burglary; however, actions should not be taken against innocent people who have no intention of ever committing the crimes. Rather, people must pay for their crimes if found guilty in the court of justice. Affirmative action assumes that all businesses will not hire minorities just because their race is that of a minority group; therefore, all businesses are forced to hire a certain number of people based on their race rather than their qualification, and thus the quality of their business is diminished. Instead, affirmative action laws should be eliminated; those guilty violating color-blind laws, including Nixon's administration, should be punished; and Herbert Humphrey should be forced to eat the paper the Bill of Rights was written on.



Works Cited

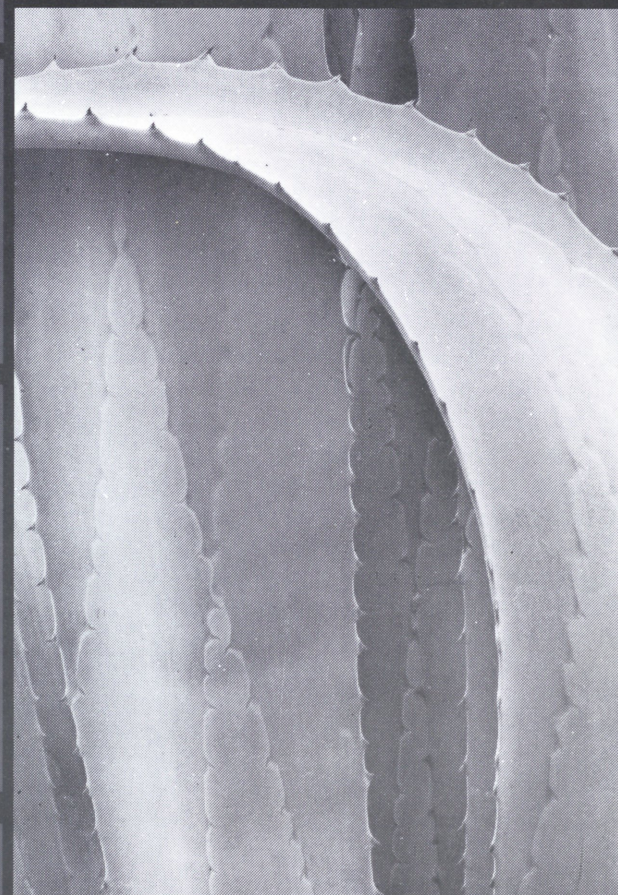
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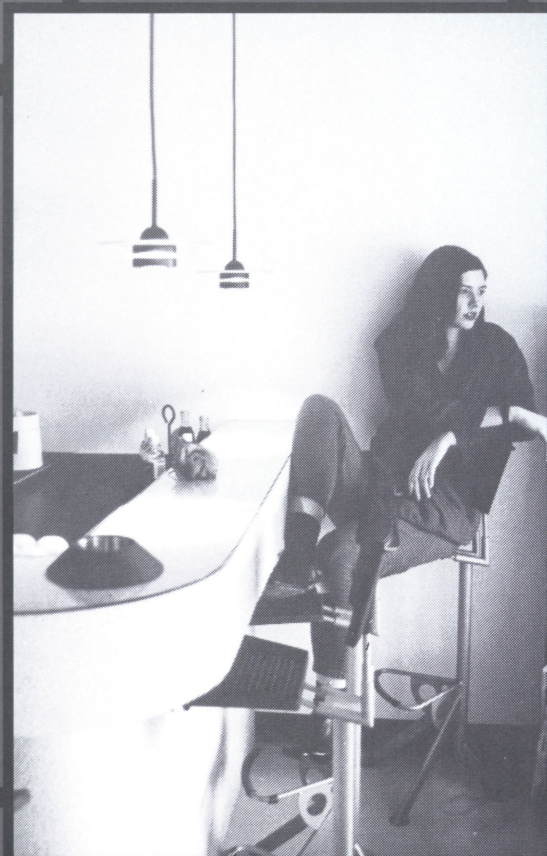


Black Windows
Matthew McClean

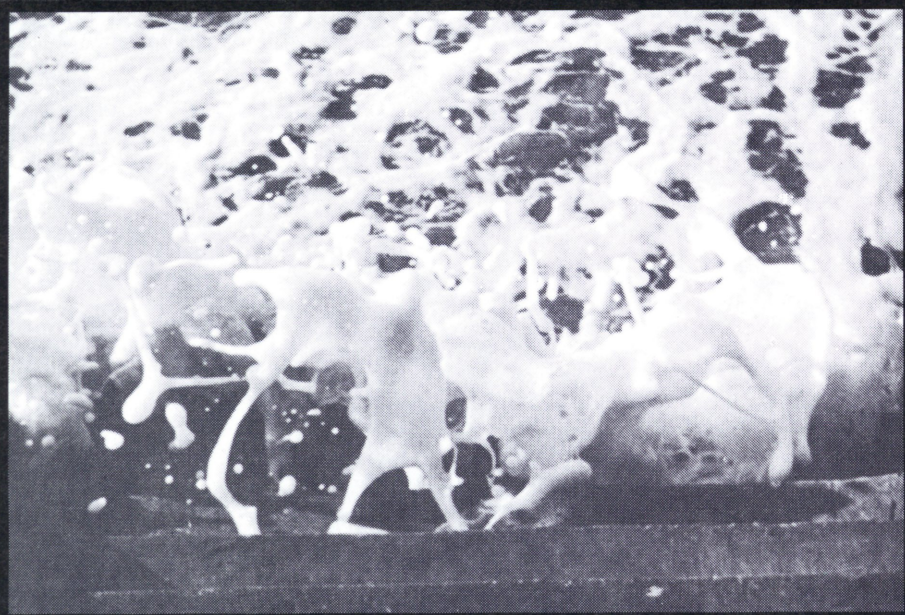
Flashback.



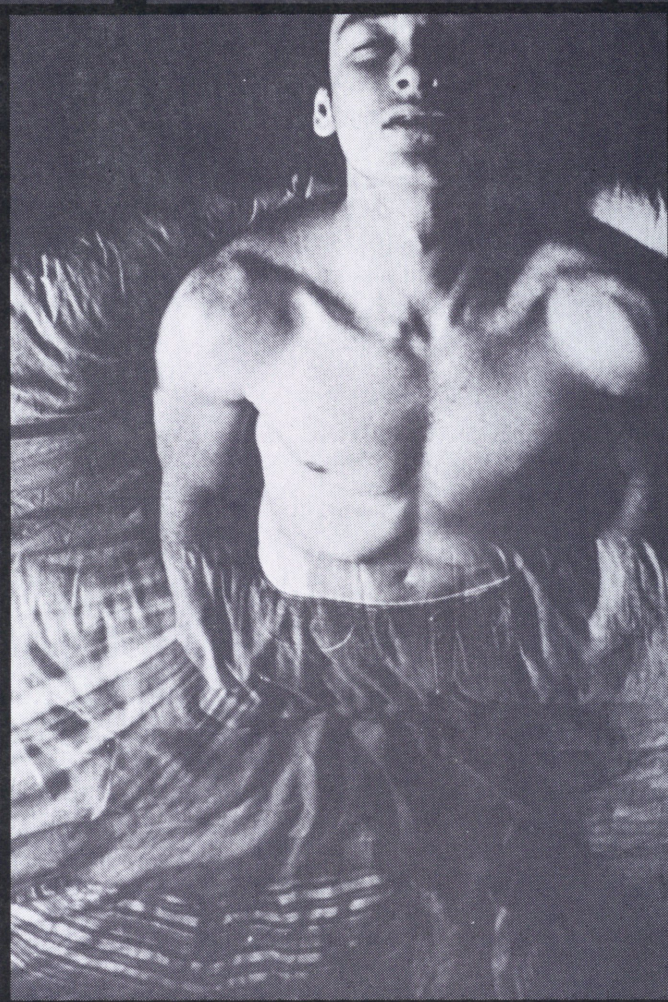
Tom Palmer
Spring 1983



Kim
Ruth Saunders
Winter 1992



Patty DiRienzo
Spring 1977



Jeff Cloar
Spring 1977

The Rubber Man

Scott Nesbitt

I was fifteen and in my second year at the Academy of Music and Fine Arts in St. Paul when I met the Rubber Man. He lived a few blocks from the Academy in an apartment above a record shop and could often be seen sweeping the sidewalk in front of the store — or, at least, standing there with a broom he'd occasionally use — and many of the boys in the music curriculum would talk to him when they visited the shop. I usually went there with my roommate Stephen Olstek, and when we had a question we asked the store's owner, Mr. Thompson, who was often sitting behind the counter reading some music magazine or other and who was always helpful, so we never talked to the Rubber Man.

On this particular December afternoon, which had a hint of snow in the air, I went alone. First semester project was three days away, and I was feeling unprepared for my part. I had gone to the store to look for a piece by Bach that my father had described on the telephone the night before; I was having particular trouble getting my fingers to cooperate on a few tricky parts of my violin piece, and my father recommended I buy one of Bach's violin concertos to study. He was, as usual, sure I could do it; he knew I could do it, he knew with just a little extra effort I could be the best violinist at the Academy. He'd been successful in his own career, building a construction company from scratch and making wise investments, and did I think he had reached that level of success without extra effort, determination, and attention to detail? I told him of course not and thanked him, and took his words with me the next day to the little record shop, but when I got there I realized I had left one important detail of the conversation behind — which of Bach's violin concertos had he recommended?

The Rubber Man had been out front dangling his broom like a pendulum when I passed by, and we had exchanged nods, and after I walked in, hung up my jacket, found the Bach section and started searching for the correct concerto, I saw him enter the store, set aside his broom and begin leafing through albums, too. After a short time I noticed he was moving toward me, rifling from Wagner all the way down through the alphabet until he got to the M's, which backed right up to Bach, and then, in one fluid motion, he reached his right arm behind his back and up and over his left shoulder, brushing by his left ear, and on down into the Bach records, nimbly pulling out of the stack a copy of Bach's G Minor Violin Concerto, which I suddenly recognized as the concerto my father had mentioned.

I glanced up from the album cover and, for the first time, really noticed the Rubber Man's face. Yes, his skin did have a rubbery appearance; starting at the forehead, it drooped and snaked its way down over his skull like a basset hound's coat. His ears stuck way out and seemed always to be twitching one way or another, and his neck made me think of putty, squishy and transformable. His eyes were soft, and a smile sliced through the folds of his face.

"This one's good, too," he said, reaching over with his left hand — in the conventional manner this time — and pulling out "The Planets" by Holst, holding both albums out for my comparison. "Of course," he added, "they're all good."



He put the albums back in the stack, untwisted himself and shuffled through some other records, then turned and walked toward his broom. I spoke, suddenly not wanting him to leave, and as I began making up a question to pose about the G Minor Concerto he interrupted and asked, "Want to hear it?"

He spoke slowly and softly, and I said sure, I'd like to hear it, and he began walking back up the alphabet, past Wagner, past the store's display section, past Mr. Thompson and on up to the first couple of stairs that led, presumably, to his apartment. There he stopped and turned his head and upper body toward me, lifted his left leg behind him and pointed over his right shoulder up the stairs with the toes of his upside-down foot. "Up there," he said. "Don't worry. It's okay."

I started toward the stairs and glanced at Mr. Thompson, who glanced up at me over his reading

glasses and his copy of Classical Review but said nothing. I climbed the steps and there at the top, in the middle of this tiny one-room apartment, the Rubber Man sat on a creaky chair, its uneven legs rocking as he crossed his own legs in impossible directions. The room was crammed with enough records for a whole store, enough posters and music memorabilia for a small museum and certainly more sheet music than I'd ever seen in the entire Academy. It was a shrine, to be sure, a symphony dense with a layer upon layer of notes. There was also a neatly-made bed, a little stove, a little sink, a little window and a door behind which I assumed was a little bathroom, and on the Rubber Man's lap there was a violin, its deep maroon finish illuminated by a band of sunlight creeping in through the venetian blinds on the window, and in his left hand was a bow, and he played the Presto Movement of Bach's Violin Concerto in G Minor, which I'd never heard before.

His rubbery face bounced around a bit during the more aggressive passages, but not nearly so much as I might've imagined; his face and indeed his whole body had become taut. Then once, during a quieter section, he played something I supposed was made up, definitely not Bach's, because its playful and silly nature was out of character with what he had been playing, and because the Rubber Man looked at me and smiled and winked as he played it. He motioned with his head and eyes for me to look at his fingers, which were wrapped around and tangled through each other like ivy, and yet were still playing their parts on the violin's neck. I looked back up at him. His face had turned a little red.

He went back into Bach and finished the piece, and we talked a minute, and I admired his records and his violin, but really I just wanted to leave. I suddenly felt awkward being there in the middle

Dame Fortune

Susan Tanner

There's a photo
of my father
black and white
and grainy shadows.

He was eighteen
and a general
pins a star,
a silver star
to his crisp
khaki chest.

My father
always said,
life is hard
enough when you
do the right thing,
but it's damned
impossible
if you don't.

Really, he said
this to me
all the time.

Continuing,
he'd say,
if you want
anything
in this world,
you have to
work for it.

He is
six-foot-four,
sees
the top
of the refrigerator,

sees
the dirt
no one
sees

and cleans it
with his hand.

Near sixty,
the man now says
it's not how
hard you work,
it's luck.
I've been
damned lucky.

of his life. So I thanked him and told him how much I liked his playing and how neat I thought his place was, and I walked back down the stairs, grabbed my coat, said good-bye to Mr. Thompson and walked out of the music shop, without the copy of Bach's G Minor Violin Concerto I had gone there to purchase. It was almost dark now and a little colder than when I entered the store, and the first few snowflakes of the night had begun to fall, and as I walked down the street toward the Academy I heard the little bell above the music shop's entrance ring twice, and it occurred to me that in all the times I'd been in that little music shop I'd never noticed that bell.

I started to tell Stephen Olstek about the Rubber Man when I got back to my room, but he was busy writing a letter, and besides, he said he already knew the Rubber Man. He said he'd heard him play the violin before, and he talks to him once in awhile, and he's a nice guy, and he even knew his name. I asked what he thought about the Rubber Man's twisting and turning the way he did, but Stephen Olstek didn't seem very impressed by that, either. It was nothing, he said, and went on to explain that the Rubber Man was a freak, which didn't mean he was a lesser person than the rest of us, only that there wasn't really a place for him in society, so he's nothing to draw attention to or exploit. He said his father explained all that to him in a recent letter. He said he was writing his father just then, as a matter of fact, and he was wondering if I'd read it for him to check for mistakes. I said sure.

The letter was all about how ready he was for first semester project and how masterfully he expected to perform, and as I read it he continued talking about the Rubber Man. He said that lots of people were like the Rubber Man, that it wasn't unusual to be double-jointed, and demonstrated by wrapping his index finger around pencil three times, and by touching the thumb and little finger of the same hand together behind his knuckles. He showed me a couple more tricks, and I told him his letter was fine, and we did some studying and went to sleep. I couldn't believe I had roomed with a guy almost a year and a half and never knew he was double-jointed.



LET'S START



MAGAZINE



An Interview With
Editor Thom Botsford
By John Q. Public

JOHN Q.: As you requested, I read through the materials for the first issue of *The Auburn Circle* and have a report. Put on your tough hide and brace yourself.

T.B.: Did you consult a representative sampling of the University community? You know — an average student, an exceptional student, a campus administrator, a normal professor, an English professor, a clergyman, a freak, a football fanatic, a journalist, a student politician, a poet?

JOHN Q.: You call a bunch like that representative? Especially the list you gave me! How do you expect to get honest opinions from seven of your good friends and four recipients of your good money? No sir, Mr. Editor, I consulted my own "representative sampling," and I can tell already you don't want to hear the verdict.

T.B.: Certainly I do. Let's have it.

JOHN Q.: Not yet. Actually the report is not complete. A few of our representatives have questions for you. If you can pussyfoot around on these like you and co-founder Jimmy Blake did with the questions of the Student Senate Budget and Finance Committee, you might save the *Circle*. Ready?

T.B.: Hold it a minute. Jimmy and I have never pussyfooted around on anything. We obviously satisfied the student senators. We got the money to print this first issue, didn't we?

JOHN Q.: Yes, you did. But, remember, you told the politicians that the *Circle* would be a *Playboy* without the pictures! My God, in places, it's more like a *Reader's Digest* without the jokes.

They're not going to be too happy with such exaggeration, you know. But I've already said too much. . .

T.B.: You always say too much, John Q. Public. While industrious citizens do their damndest to pull something off. . .

JOHN Q.: Thank you, Tricky. You have indeed pulled something off. But stop feeling sorry for yourself and answer the first question. Mr. Average Student wants to know what in the hell this magazine is supposed to accomplish. He says *The Plainsman* and *WEGL* keep him informed, football and concerts keep him entertained, and textbooks keep him depressed. Now, what void will the *Circle* fill?

T.B.: Ah. . .

JOHN Q.: Start pussyfootin'.

T.B.: All right, it's supposed to inform, entertain, and maybe even depress the reader a bit — but in a different way from the other publications and activities you mentioned. Let's look at it from the perspective of a community writer. In the *Circle* context, he has more room to move, certainly greater stylistic freedom, a chance to pursue matters many copy inches beyond the editorial-feature story slot. And because he has more time to think and revise than, say, a *Plainsman* reporter does, he is expected to write better. His article, story, or poem has to pass review by members of our board of editors. So we've instituted a workshop of sorts, not only for writers but also for photographers and artists.

JOHN Q.: The Average Student thinks all that is fine and maybe a bit pompous. But he says he can find more professional material, for less than a dollar, on the newstand.

T.B.: Much more professional, certainly. But more immediately applicable to our community and state, not always. We have localized some of our approaches. Mr. Little, for example, in his fine article on endangered species, primarily discusses the problem as it concerns us here in Alabama. You can't buy that on the newstand. And our interviewing team — I'm proud of them — caught former governor Folsom in a sassy mood, talking about regional matters, even campus issues like women's dorm restrictions. But the most important advantage for Mr. Average Student lies in the easy accessibility of most of our contributors. What Big Jim Folsom says about state legislators applies to us, too. You can find *Circle* people grooving around Auburn and Opelika anytime. If you don't like what they write, if you want to debate them on the concourse, they're merely a telephone call away. The staff believes any exchange of opinions, heated or not, complements a University education and — besides — is just plain fun.

JOHN Q.: Pretty good pussyfootin'. But will it keep the customer satisfied?

T.B.: Tell him the *Circle* will look good on his coffee table. And it's free.

JOHN Q.: Ah, yes, snob appeal. Now let's move on to the English professor.

T.B.: God help us. Who is he?

JOHN Q.: The only one — other than the gentleman in your pay — who would read it. The rarefied air on the ninth floor, by the way, made my visit somewhat uncomfortable. You should really give me credit for going to so much trouble, all to spare you a little future shock.

T.B.: Muckraker. But tell me what the professor said.

JOHN Q.: I've forgotten all of it except one word — "Philippinism."

T.B.: No! You must mean something concerning Philistines.

JOHN Q.: That's what he called the lot of you.

T.B.: (after muttering something) Why don't we hear from the next one? Tell me, if you don't mind, what the Reverend Rod Sinclair said about the *Circle*.

JOHN Q.: I told you I didn't use your list. My clerical representative is the Reverend Elias C. Priggs of Barbour County. He has a son at Auburn and is well known among footwashing Baptists for his earnest, rustic appeal.

T.B.: I suppose he was disappointed.

JOHN Q.: Disappointed? Hell, he put a hex on you all. Big Jim's profanity, Ayn Rand's selfishness, Jack Mountain's heresy...

T.B.: Pray for open minds. Did you tell him that many of our staff members are devout Christians who believe the Faith healthiest when it transcends concern over petty mores and confronts skepticism in the raw...

JOHN Q.: Yes, I told him, and he put a hex on me, too.

T.B.: That sort of totalitarianism eats on my soul. The *Circle*, if it survives, will eventually embrace the full spectrum of

thought — religious, political, cultural. We welcome controversy. We love it. Our ultimate goal is to establish a forum for the vigorous exchange of opinions. So we look forward to letters to the editor and to controversy breaking out like pimples all over the campus.

JOHN Q.: Pimples?

T.B.: Yes, pimples. But the energy spent resolving controversy — or, at least, bringing it out in the open — will drain the pus, the bile, the bad temper, from our system and make for clearer thinking, a sounder mental complexion.

JOHN Q.: You're crazy.

T.B.: You tell the Reverend that we thank God for sparing us a life of conformity, of "one way" this and "one way" that. And tell him we will even accept one of his manuscripts if it's readable. You see, each writer speaks only for himself, not for the staff or our publisher, the Board of Student Communications.

JOHN Q.: If humanity ever worships the God of controversy, you could go into the ministry and administer the new opiate.

T.B.: Which poet did you consult?

JOHN Q.: Two of them: Rod McKuen and one who wishes to remain anonymous.

T.B.: Oh, how did Rod react to the poetry of his cousin, Elrod of Pine Sap, Arkansas?

JOHN Q.: He loved Elrod's poetry, said he must meet Elrod's pussycat sometime. But the anonymous poet was the real

stickler. After reading all of the poems, he nearly lost consciousness, muttering for hours: "I must be polite, I should be polite...."

T.B.: Well, that wasn't very polite...."

JOHN Q.: Can you blame him? Don't you think he and every other poet, and every poetry teacher as well, tire of feigning polite interest in the verse of Consciousness III, the verse of the Silent Majority, the rhymes of Mr. Everybody? Mr. Allen Tate says, "There is nothing so presumptuous as poetry." So why don't you leave presumption to those who have earned the right, through excellence, to presume? Hugh Hefner doesn't publish poetry. He knows that most people hate poetry and that the few who love it are generally vicious critics who think an aspiring poet should shut himself up in an attic for years until he writes a good poem. Your workshop theory fails to move these turnips. They won't bleed a bit.

T.B.: The *Circle* is not for turnips. Although the poetry is not in my department, I'll try to illustrate in musical terms. You know I listen to jazz and consequently admire the spunk of those who dare to defy every rule in the book of so-called good taste to express themselves. We hear plenty of bad jazz as a result. But we also hear some very excellent jazz that wouldn't be around today if some turnip had sent Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane to the woodshed. This magazine, to speak bluntly, will be a poetic weed garden. Occasionally, however, some beautiful wild flower might appear. For what it's worth, the poems in this issue passed review by a committee consisting of one English teacher, two English graduate

Continued on page 45



students, one English undergraduate, and one far out photographer. We did the best we could.

JOHN Q.: Why don't you stop trying to speak metaphorically. You're dismal.

T.B.: Was I speaking metaphorically? Gee...

JOHN Q.: Just get ready for the turnips. In the meantime, what do you have to say to Fred Freak who expected a right-on *Rolling Stone* local full of far-out affectations and dopey put-ons?

T.B.: We owe Fred an apology. A quasi-underground thing, we discovered, is out of our league. We aren't cosmic enough for that. But we hope to feature a story on the Duane Allman tradition in our next issue. For that, we plan to send a couple of reporters to Macon, Georgia, cradle of the new Southern music.

JOHN Q.: Fred will give you another chance. And so will our representative of the exceptional students. In fact, he's volunteered to help pull the *Circle* up to exceptional standards. How can he contribute?

T.B.: Just have him contact any member of the board of editors. (They're listed on the inside front cover.) Or have him mail any manuscript, or idea for a manuscript, to the *Circle*, 326 North College Street in Auburn. We can't return manuscripts so tell him to keep a duplicate. By the way, do you hear that shouting and pounding at the back door? It's been worrying me for the duration of the interview.

JOHN Q.: I thought you knew about the War Eagle mob. They're after the blood of one of your writers, Jimmy Weldon. His review of two Auburn football books infuriated them.

T.B.: Maybe if I invite them inside they'll understand that Weldon loves football as much as they do. A review, however, must point to weaknesses, not just offer panegyrics to please a friend or reinforce public opinion. Auburn's tradition of gridiron excellence, the work of men like Coach Jordan and Jeff Beard, deserves the best. Weldon thinks David Housel could offer that someday. I don't understand why they're so upset.

JOHN Q.: If you invite them in, I'll leave.

T.B.: Just tell them, if you will, that Weldon doesn't live here and that I didn't write the review.

JOHN Q.: Sure. I have to go in a minute anyhow. But first, the final verdict. I've taken all your pussyfootin' into consideration...

T.B.: Before you let it all hang out, let me thank a few people for their advice, support, and hard work on this first issue. Last year's SGA Administrative Vice President Jimmy Blake is the co-founder....

JOHN Q.: I get it. Now that you have an intuition my report is unfavorable, you want to spread the blame.

T.B.: You have just insulted my integrity, Mr. Public. But I'm not a quitter. Let me make that perfectly clear.

JOHN Q.: Thank you, Tricky.

T.B.: Let me thank Stan Blackburn, now a law student at the University of Virginia, for managing the financial end of the project last spring. And I mentioned Jimmy Blake, now a medical student at the University of Alabama. Then there's last year's SGA President Jerry Batts who first contacted Big Jim Folsom for us; and this year's SGA President Ed Milton, who assisted in the Folsom interview and continues to offer first class moral support. David Housel, I discovered, really believes in miracles: he helped put together our budget request data the night before committee hearings. Thank you, Duke. So many others assisted in the administrative-political arena, I couldn't list them all. To mention a few: SGA Vice-President Mike Wilson; Budget and Finance Committee Chairman Bill Alvis; Interfraternity Council Secretary-Treasurer Bill Stone; *Plainsman* Editor Bill Wood (see his story on draft beer in this issue); Dean of Student Affairs James Foy and his assistant, Dr. T. Drew Ragan.

On the editorial side of matters, thanks to our advisor Kaye Lovvorn, editor of the *Auburn Alumnews*, and journalist-writer Mr. Jerry Roden, Jr. of the English Department, for blunting the adolescent edge of our efforts. They were assisted, for hours on end, by Dr. Robert Andelson (philosophy) and Dr. Charlotte Ward (physics) — who, by the way, wrote an excellent piece on threats to scientific freedom for this issue. Thanks also to our three student board members — Art Fourier, Jan Cooper, and Wells Warren — for writing, editing, and advising to the point of exhaustion.

The art and photography in this issue come to you courtesy of Art Director Dottie Hitchcock and her cousin, Photo Editor John Hitchcock. With the help of Barbara Ball, they spent their Christmas vacation at the drawing board and in the dark room. Because the *Circle* should develop into a workshop for artists and photographers, they seek exceptional assistance, and, for the next issue, some professional criticism.

Also offering advice and moral support: Dr. David Jeffrey (English); Dr. Charlie Rose (English); Dr. Bert Hitchcock (English); Dr. Gordon C. Bond (history); Dr. Wesley Newton (history); Dr. Robert Mount (zoology); Mr. Conrad Ross (art); Dr. Ian Hardin (consumer affairs); Assistant Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Leslie Campbell; Dean of Women Katharine Cater...

JOHN Q.: Catch your breath before you libel anyone else.

T.B.: I'm sure I'm forgetting some others. All the writers, for instance...

JOHN Q.: I think you have enough company now. All these good people you have pestered for months...

T.B.: Let's have the verdict.



THOM BOTSFORD



DOTTIE HITCHCOCK



JOHN HITCHCOCK

Flashback



The Freudian Path
Randy Nowell
Spring 1974

The Patty-Cake Principle

Leslie Whatley

As the choir director stepped into the small cafe, he wondered if he might be cursed. No logical explanation could be made for the loss of voice that nearly half of the choir had experienced over the last week. One by one they had called him, usually husbands, wives, or parents, calling to report a missing voice. So sorry. It's the strangest thing. Can you possibly do without her this Sunday? She'll be so sorry. A humidifier, did you say? It's probably just a virus, but I'll pass that on to her. Thanks so much, goodbye.

A virus? The choir director had never in all his years encountered a virus that only took voices. And so many of them, so quickly. There had to be another explanation. He, who had spoken to each of the afflicted individuals only a week before at rehearsal, had not lost his voice. No, at the Sunday service he had been in top form, filling the church with beautiful music.

The congregation had been lavish with its praise. It was marvelous, they said. And with only half a choir. It was true that the unafflicted choir members were apprehensive about their own sparse numbers, struggled with the hymns and actually sounded as if they were singing from underneath a glass bowl, but the choir director raised his voice to encourage them, to keep them from being lost in the murky rabble of the voices of the rest of the congregation. It had almost turned into a solo performance.

But the choir director was troubled. That afternoon at rehearsal the afflicted voices were still missing and more had dropped away. Who would sing the hymns? His modesty would not permit him to sing by himself. His once glorious choir had turned into a hesitant clump of squeaky housewives.

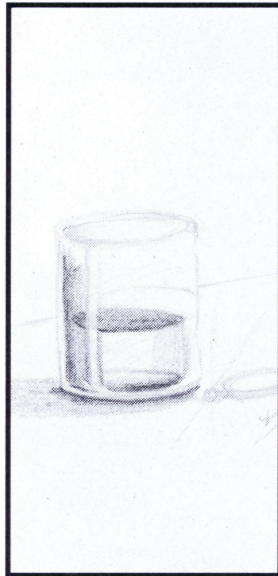
Perhaps they are trying to bow out on me, he thought. Perhaps our minister has offended them in some way, and they've decided to find another church with some other choir. That thought made the choir director a bit angry. They wouldn't just leave like that, he thought. They wouldn't leave me!

The cafe was busy, so the choir director sat down at a small table in the corner in front of a previous patron's dirty dishes. At the table next to him, a young couple were arguing with each other.

"I can't believe you just said that to me. How could you even think that?" she said. She crossed her thin arms and glared at the young man. The choir director tried not to stare, but he couldn't help but notice her striking features - her black hair and her dark, angry eyes. "You can't treat me like that," she said. "Maybe you don't have feelings, but I do."

"I've got feelings..." The young man's voice was quiet and deep and rich, rasping, but almost mechanical in its inflection. He stared at the half-eaten sandwich on the plate before him. His face was blank, but his deep eyes trembled with melancholy.

"Well, you don't show them. It's almost like you're embarrassed to be seen with me or something..." The choir director looked out the window and stopped listening to what they were saying. He wasn't a nosy person. Instead, he listened to their voices - the woman's angry contralto and the man's deep baritone, which was rich and flat at the same time. Both were good voices, thought the choir director, but they needed work.



The couple stopped their arguing when a thin and freckled busboy in a white apron came with a wide plastic bucket and cleared the dishes off their table. The choir director leaned back in his chair as the busboy cleared the dishes away from his table, too. The busboy picked up the bucket and wove his way through the crowded cafe to the kitchen.



The kitchen door opened with a bang as the busboy backed his way inside holding the bucket in his hands. Steam hung in the air with the sounds of rattling dishes and running water. The busboy set the plastic bucket at the foot of a mountain of crusty pots and pans on the long stainless steel counter beside the sink. He looked at the dishwasher, who was also wearing a white apron, but his was stained and wet with dishwater. The dishwasher glared at the new dishes, then he glared at the busboy. His face was flushed, glistening warmly under beads of sweat.

"Sorry," said the busboy, and he left the kitchen, leaving the dishwasher alone in the heat next to the mountain of dishes.

The dishwasher turned to the new dishes and set his jaw. He grumbled curses through his clenched teeth. He began to pull the dishes out of the bucket one by one, dumping the crumbs, the lettuce leaves, bread crusts, greasy napkins, and half-eaten sandwiches into the garbage can beside him. He dumped ice and Coke and tea and slices of lemon out of the glasses and into the sink. He stacked the dishes next to a hose with a nozzle on the end for rinsing before he stacked them up on racks and pushed them into the big industrial washing machine which wasn't working properly. The dishwasher handled the dishes roughly. He was having a bad day. He was daring those dishes to break.

The dishwasher had been washing the mountain of dishes for nearly six hours, but the mountain had not diminished. For every dish that he rinsed, stacked, and pushed into the dishwasher, five more were added to the mountain. He was ready to stop washing dishes. He was ready to leave the cafe and go to a girl's house. He had been thinking about this girl for nearly five and a half hours. He thought about quitting his job.

The girl was a friend of the dishwasher's. She had long brown hair and green eyes. She smiled a lot. The dishwasher was crazy about her, but she didn't know it. For a few weeks now, the dishwasher had had the compulsion to grab her and kiss her whenever they were together, but he had not done it.

Now, washing the dishes, he thought about her and a young man he had once seen her with. The dishwasher imagined them sitting close together on a sofa and laughing at something. He couldn't stand it. It made him insane with jealousy. His throat lumped up like he had swallowed a basketball. His face heated up and his knuckles turned white gripping the dishes. He wanted to rip off his apron and run out of the kitchen and out of the cafe and straight to the girl's house. And when she came to the door he would grab her in his arms and kiss her. He clenched his teeth and cursed under his breath and washed dishes.

The dishwasher reached into the bucket and pulled out a glass. He dumped out the ice and slices of lemon that were inside. As he set

the glass on the rack to go into the washing machine, he saw something sparkling in the sink. He reached in, pushing aside the ice and slices of lemon and wet grains of rice and soggy beans, and picked up a small gold ring with a diamond set into it. He looked carefully at the ring, rinsed it off, dried it on a dry spot of his apron, and marched out of the kitchen into the cafe.



The dishwasher looked out at all the people sitting at the tables, eating, talking, laughing. He was happy to get out of the kitchen. He raised his voice and asked, "Has anyone lost a ring?"

Silence fell over the cafe as people turned toward the dishwasher. Some looked up at his face, other looked at the ring in his raised hand. Some of them looked expectantly at their fellow diners. Some looked down at their own hands.

In the silence, two people could be heard murmuring argumentatively. The diners turned to look at the young couple sitting beside the choir director. They sat stiffly erect, not looking at each other or at anyone else. They were whispering together, but they refused to lean over the table. The people in the cafe stared at them.

The girl at the cash register walked over to the dishwasher to take a look at the ring. "It's an engagement ring," she announced happily. The cashier had recently gotten engaged herself.

Some of the diners turned to see who had just spoken. Others turned to look at the engagement ring in the dishwasher's puffy hand. But most of them watched the whispered argument go on in the corner.

Nobody could tell what they were saying, but they could hear the sharp hisses they were making. The young couple sat together like a pair of statues, not quite facing one another.

Finally, the woman crossed her arms. The young man slumped over. Then he slowly cranked himself up to a standing position. He stood with his head hanging down, looking at the linoleum floor. Everyone in the cafe stared at him.

"It's mine," he said in his deep, rasping voice. But he made no move to go over and take the ring from the dishwasher. Again the cafe was silent. The young man stood very still, staring down at his feet. A breathless intensity had come over the diners. The air rang with anticipation.

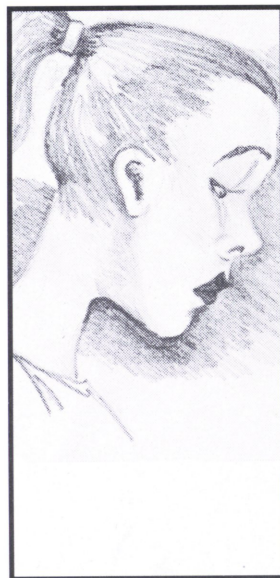
The young woman stood up, took her purse from where it hung on the back of the chair and stepped towards the door.

"Don't leave..." said the young man in his mechanical voice, still staring at his shoes. He had spoken so silently that only the young woman and the choir director had heard him.

"Why not?" she asked coldly. And she turned and began to weave her way through the silent tables toward the door.

The choir director opened his mouth, and out of it came a voice that was deep and rich, rasping, almost mechanical, but filled with emotion.

"Because I love you," the choir director said. "Don't go!"



The young woman turned and looked at the young man. All of the diners looked at the young man. The cashier, the bus-boy and the dishwasher all looked at the young man. The young man looked at the choir director and then he looked at the young woman.

The choir director looked at the half-eaten sandwich on the plate before him.

The young woman's face softened. A tear rolled down her cheek and sparkled on her chin.



"I love you, too," she said, and she weaved her way through the hushed tabled to the young man.

"Will you marry me?" he asked.

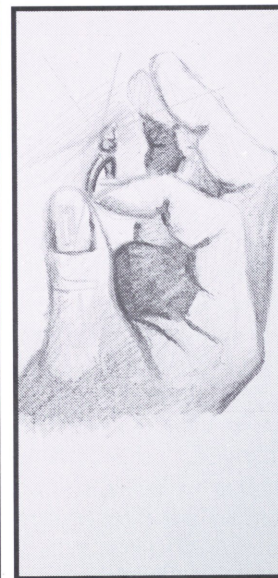
"Yes," she said.

And he took her into his arms and kissed her. The diners burst into applause. They cheered with glee. They hooted. They squealed. A few women dabbed at moist eyes with hankies, and two old ladies actually began to play a game of patty-cake.

Looking out at the jubilation, the dishwasher set his jaw. A fierce determination burned in his eyes. He untied his apron and threw it on the floor. On his way out, he paused to drop the engagement ring onto the table next to where the young couple stood kissing, the table at which the choir director was sitting. Outside, he set off running toward the house of a certain girl with green eyes.

The cafe bubbled with happiness. Everyone was yelling and laughing together, overjoyed. The choir director suspected that they all might just bust out singing, but they did not. In their midst, the newly-engaged couple stood kissing, oblivious to their exuberant audience.

The choir director lifted his hand to attract the waiter. He opened his mouth to yell over the din of the crowd. He was going to say, "Check, please!" but nothing came out. A virus, he thought to himself. He looked at the diamond ring sparkling beside his water glass and smiled.



Flashback

Interviewing the Interviewers

Sumarie Bass

When you start looking for a job, parents always like to give advice. Parents, teachers, friends, and people in the Placement Office that you don't even know try to help at this crucial period in life. *The Circle* went further and asked the people who hire Auburn graduates what they look for when they interview.

Nancy Rush, Manager of Executive Development for Parisian, said the first thing she looks for is past work experience. "If a student has worked his or her way through school, that can compensate for a lower GPA," she points out.

Work experience is not required, but helpful, especially if it is co-op work or an internship in a related field, according to Susan Collins, corporate recruiter for Electronic Data Systems Corporation (EDS). EDS hires many Auburn students for their computing contracts.

Frank Davis is chief engineer for Texas Instruments' Electro-Optics Systems. TI conducts recruiting differently by sending engineers to interview. Davis says they are better qualified to tell engineering students what to expect in the work world. He says if students have work experience, they are usually more mature and accustomed to an engineering environment. A student with work experience has a less romantic view of the job and is more likely to stay with the company.

Davis also says that GPA is important. He says that TI looks for approximately a 3.0, which is their cut-off for students recommended from the Placement Office, but they also accept transcripts from students with GPAs as low as a 2.8. Davis says if a student has below a 3.0 the company looks for special qualities that a prospective employee may possess to make up the difference.

Collins agrees. She says EDS prefers a 3.0 GPA for two of the programs she recruits for, and 3.5 for the third program. Although the company looks at the total individual, Collins says, "Don't let people fool you and tell you grades aren't important, because they are."

Jim Shannon, supervisor of Engineering for Alabama Power, says, "We like people who are smart." Shannon states that a student with a 3.5 GPA who is a "people person" and has a solid work experience background is the ideal prospective employee but Alabama Power looks at all aspects of the students they interview.

Shannon also states that extracurricular activities can be a benefit to students seeking employment. "Extracurricular activities can broaden a person," especially leadership positions in those activities, he says.

Larry Wright, employment supervisor for the Acustar Division of Chrysler Corporation, emphasizes that extracurricular activities are not necessary, but they are a bonus to students' past records.

Davis says extracurricular activities do not weigh heavily at Texas Instruments, but he definitely looks at a student's activities. "The

more you have, the better you are" when interviewing, he asserts. Davis states that extracurricular activities show someone can function as a "team player" and is capable of communicating.

Communication is a watchword with many recruiters. Shannon says at Alabama Power the biggest complaint about the people in technological aspects of the company is that, while they are good engineers, they need to be able to communicate. "That's what supervi-

Collins tells of an interview one of her colleagues conducted in which the student thought EDS stood for "Electronic Dating Service."

sion, management is all about - motivating people," he states.

Rush stresses the need for the management trainees she hires to be flexible, adaptable, and to enjoy meeting people. "If as many people loved people as said they loved people, we'd have world peace," Rush comments. Rush recommends that students who interview give specific answers to questions. Don't say, "I was a good worker." Tell why - "because I consistently closed the store." Don't be vague; interviewers need specifics.

Communication skills have more weight in some interviews than others, according to Shannon. This aspect is more important for someone interviewing for a management position than for someone interviewing for a job that has less public contact such as construction work or accounting. Extracurricular activities and writing experience are two ways to demonstrate communication skills.

Davis points out that being able to carry on a two-way conversation is important. The interview is the main way an employer can evaluate one-to-one interaction. "The ability to have interpersonal communication skills is very important," stresses Davis.

The need for employees with good communication skills could be an asset for liberal arts majors, and if a liberal arts student is interested in seeking employment outside traditional fields, there are several avenues open.

At Alabama Power, liberal arts majors can find opportunities in the media and public relations. A job in government affairs such as lobbying would be open to a student with a major in history or other humanities. Shannon notes that while there are opportunities for students with other majors, Alabama Power hires far more engineers.

According to Davis, Texas Instruments hires some liberal arts majors, but the competition is very tough, and the chances of getting a job at this engineering firm with a liberal arts degree are slim. TI hires 500-1500 engineers per year, 10-20 people in business, and fewer in other fields each year.

A management position at Parisian, on the other hand, is open to a graduate with any major. Rush points out that the main quality the company looks for is an ability to work well with people.

...And here's where
I had my operation!



THE INTERVIEW OF A NERD

Kelly Benefield

According to Collins, at Electronic Data Systems their systems engineering program is open to any major as long as the student has technical aptitude. Collins says this aptitude is usually shown through course work.

The resume is another part of the interview process that concerns many students. Collins asserts that a resume is an important first impression, especially when sent through the mail. She prefers to see a neat and accurate one-page resume on good paper. "Grammar and spelling are very important," she adds.

Recruiters who come through the Placement Office rely heavily on the form resume given by that office. The information is readily available; the form is concise, and interviewers know where to find what they need.

Davis says as far as resumes go, the content is what is important, "not how well you fill out that form." He emphasizes, "If you don't have good grades, you don't have any work experience, and you weren't involved, it doesn't matter how you write it down."

One of the most important aspects of the interview is to be prepared," declares Davis. "It makes a much stronger impression if they know a little about your company, about your

product," he says. He estimates only one in fifteen has a working knowledge of the company. Information on Texas Instruments, as well as many other companies, is easily accessible in the Placement Office on campus. TI has a videotape in the Placement Office that is very beneficial to prospective employees, according to Davis.

Collins tells of an interview one of her colleagues conducted in which the student thought EDS stood for "Electronic Dating Service." She says that it is important for a student to do his homework on the company - read, call, and be prepared to ask questions. Collins recommends that students utilize the Placement Office to research companies, get help writing resumes, and for practice interviews.

Wright says if a student asks something about Chrysler that is readily available information, it is insulting, like the interviewer asking something that has already been answered on a resume. On the other hand, it is flattering to know the student has researched and knows something about the company.

"Have some questions prepared; write them down," recommends Rush. She also says students should make a point to ask good

questions. "An interviewer can tell a lot about people by the questions they ask," she points out.

In conclusion, here are some general tips that Collins gives for interviewing:

1) Bring a notebook and take notes. This shows a real interest in the company.

2) Bring a calendar. If the interviewer wants to set up another appointment, be prepared to find an available date.

3) Be enthusiastic. Collins says her first question is always, "Tell me about yourself." This is a student's chance to sell themselves and

an interviewer's opportunity to see how well the students can express themselves.

4) Find out what the next step of the process is. Ask, "Can I call you next week?" Follow up on the interview.

Most importantly, the interview is to determine if there is a match of interest. Collins says at EDS they like to say that an interview is an "exchange of ideas and information." An interview is a time to find out if you're right for the company, and if the company is right for you.



Spring 1989

Continued from page 31.

the shallowest water near the bank. Tadpoles, upset by the intrusion, scurried frantically around the watermelon. As we stepped back to admire Robert's ingenuity at anchoring our treasure, the smell of mint rushed up to protest our intrusion, too. And a lizard darted from the mint bed into the river, slicing the water as it disappeared. Nature was in for an even greater upheaval, though, in what happened next.

Robert suddenly grabbed me and kissed me smack on the lips, so fast that I hardly had time to react. I found myself deaf to any sound except a hollow heart-pounding, but it was impossible to tell whose heart it was. Shortly afterward, the rest of my senses failed me, too, and so did my knees. Robert followed. My senses returned and the smell of crushed mint was overwhelming. I opened my eyes and saw crickets and felt weeds scratching my back - then tadpoles and my wet hair itching me, plastered to my neck. Robert was holding me, bringing me up out of the water, saving me, baptizing me "in the Holy Spirit," he said.

VII

Fear. We had been told dozens of times not to ever go near the river bank unless adults were with us. Mattie had even warned that she would "skin us alive" if she ever heard tell of us going down to that river where so many had drowned. Red dust stuck to our wet bodies and clothes as Robert pedalled furiously toward home.

When we rode into Mama Brown's yard, we could see Annie and Mattie and Duck standing at the back door. Papa Brown was on the top step, beside Mama Brown, talking to them. Robert realized at the same time I did that Mattie was crying, and stopped the bicycle abruptly. He motioned for me to be quiet and follow him around the house. I knew we were going to eavesdrop. We squatted under the porte-cochere and listened to Annie explain between sobs:

"Blindman he come right up on the porch and say what he want. I say, 'Blindman, you crazy. Go on now. Leave me alone.'"

An interval of sobs. Then she continued:

"I know Blindman must can see out of one eye 'cause he grab me right there - and I had to come off the porch to keep him from pulling my britches off. Duck she walk up and say, 'leave her 'lone.' Then Blindman turn on Duck and knock her on the ground and got down on her."

Both Annie and Duck began to sob louder, then Annie continued:

"Duck jes happen to have a knife in her hand and that when she stab him."

Robert and I looked at each other, our eyes as big as saucers, and we barely heard Papa Brown say that the only thing to do was to call the sheriff and tell him the whole story,

exactly like they had told it to him. Then Duck started screaming and broke into a run. Annie tried to stop her, but Mattie just shook her head sadly and said to let her go, that she couldn't go anywhere but home anyway.

Mama Brown asked where Blindman was now and Annie said they'd left him bleeding in the yard, but they couldn't tell how bad he was hurt. Everybody was too afraid to get close enough to him to find out. Papa Brown told Mattie and Annie to get in his car. He'd take them home and see how bad off Blindman was before they called for the sheriff. Mama Brown said she'd have to wait at the house since I was still out.

As the car lights disappeared down the road, red, like two devil's eyes, Robert told me to go inside and put on dry clothes. He said he felt sick. I felt sick, too.

Cold, stiff, sweetmilk gravy sickened me more as Mama Brown reprimanded that I shouldn't "pick at" my food. Mattie had left supper on the stove when the confusion had started, and a film had now grown over the gravy, like semi-stiff jelly. A few spots of grease beaded under the streak o' lean, and the re-heated coffee tasted like socks smell in a gymnasium dressing room.

I asked Mama Brown what was wrong and she hesitated, then said that Bindman had tried to kiss Duck and that Duck had stabbed him in self-defense. "Papa Brown," she said, as if to end the conversation, "has gone to see about Blindman and settle things."

I ate the streak o' lean and chewed the rinds, then raked the cold biscuits and disgusting gravy into the slop bucket and went to my room. The day had been a strange one - a baptism and a stabbing. I wanted to sleep, but I wondered where Duck had gone and whether Blindman would live. And I wondered why Robert had acted so strangely at the river. Mama had said to call anytime I wanted, not just on Sunday night. I wished it weren't so late, but I really didn't know what I'd say if I called her.

That night I dreamed that I looked in the gazing globe and had no face, but behind me, I could see Blindman with a knife. He was grinning, showing all his teeth, staring at me with red eyes.

VIII

The next morning arrived early with the odor of burned bacon and Mattie moaning, "Nobody's seen the trouble I've seen...Nobody's seen the woe..." and I heard Mama Brown tell her to go home for he rest of the day, that she wouldn't be able to get anything done anyway as long as she was so upset over Duck disappearing.

"As soon as she gets word that Blindman's going to live, she'll come home. You go to the house and wait for her," Mama Brown insisted.

Outside, it was growing hot, but a slow morning breeze moved the clothes that Mattie had hand-washed and hung on the line to dry.

By ten o' clock, the sun would stop the breeze dead-still and in minutes, the clothes that had hung damp for hours would be bone-dry. The petunias that lifted their faces gratefully in the morning dew would look pitifully like the collapsing mouths of toothless old women by noon.

Mattie was still sitting in the kitchen when Robert rode up, full of news. He had been down to the river to check on the watermelon only to find the watermelon gone, but Duck asleep under a tree next to some torn-up watermelon rind. I wanted to tell Mattie immediately that Duck was okay, but Robert said we couldn't. He said we had to hurry. Duck wanted us to go with her to see an old lady named Madame Queen.

I remembered the story Mama told in the car, and I knew we'd be in trouble if we got caught, but Robert kept talking about how Madame Queen was supposed to be a witch who knew how to take spells off of people and how to see the future. Even as I told him I didn't think we ought to go there, I was climbing on the fender of the bike and he had that look on his face that said he knew he'd won before he'd even started talking.

"Did you tell her Blindman's okay?" I asked.

"She says there's a curse on her that causes her to do things and that only Madame Queen can take it off. She says if Madame Queen can't help her, she might just jump in the river before she kills somebody when she has one of her spells," Robert answered, putting an end to any indecision that might still have existed over whether or not we'd really go to Madame Queen's.

IX

The road to Madame Queen's house was long and winding. It would be impossible for a car to travel it. It had been so gutted out by rain and kept that way by disuse.

Duck had managed to sneak home to get her valuables so that she might work out a trade with Madame Queen. She didn't have any money to pay for the old lady's services, but figured Madame Queen might trade for a piece of costume jewelry or a figurine - or the only piece of money she did have, a silver dollar with a hole in it. She said it had the year she was born on it, and that Mattie had tied it around her neck on a black shoestring when she was still a baby. For luck, she said, and I wondered if she still wore it around her neck, or if it was bundled up with the other valuables in the pillowcase now jingling in the basket of the bicycle.

It was dark, even in the middle of the morning, so deep in the woods. We saw an owl sitting on an old dead tree limb. Duck's eyes got big, and she howled out, "Ooooh God,"

Flash

and then told us that an owl meant somebody was going to die. She said if Blindman died, they'd send her off.

When I reminded her that Blindman was all right, she said maybe it meant she was going to die, maybe Blindman was going to come back and kill her.

Robert tried to make her hush, but she just kept moaning and mumbling about the penitentiary and Blindman not being blind. She quieted down when we saw that we were approaching what must be Madame Queen's yard.

The house must have been grand in its day. It had concrete steps leading up to a big front porch, now sagging, but no less grand. The heavy double front doors were lined on both sides and across the top with squares of colored glass. Several of the tiny windows had been broken out, and now wadded-up newspaper was stuffed in their places. By the edge of the porch was a dead cedar tree whose branches had been sawed to stubs, and on every stub someone had placed colored glass bottles. On one branch there hung an old, cracked, amber-colored tea pitcher.

Duck looked scared as we climbed the steps, but finally knocked on the door and called, "Miss Madame Queen?," more like a question than anything else. While we were waiting for an answer, Robert squeezed my arm and signaled for me to look out to the side of the house. In Madame Queen's garden, there were dolls hung by their necks from ropes on every tree, and posts were erected in the center of the garden with dead crows dangling from them.

When the double doors flew open, Robert and I both jumped back a foot, like we'd been caught doing something - or like we wondered if we might end up hanging from a tree in the garden.

Madame Queen had two long gray plaits of hair and a silver quarter-moon earring was dangling from one ear. Her eyes were old and as green as they were brown. Her clothes were ordinary enough, but when she moved to motion us into the house, I noticed that the silver earring was not the only trinket she wore. Around each ankle she wore a black ribbon full of jangly coins, and around her neck hung a medallion with strange words and pictures on it. Robert later told me it was the Zodiac.

In the big hall, what was left of the peeling wallpaper was faded and circled. There was no electricity so far back in the woods, so the house smelled like the kerosene that lighted it. A lamp sat on top of an old rolltop desk, and I wondered how Madame Queen came to have such a piece of furniture.

Duck told Madame Queen her story and explained that we were her friends. Then she told her that she didn't have any money to

pay her to get rid of the evil spell, but that she had brought all the valuables she owned to see if Madame Queen would take them in exchange for her services.

Madame Queen directed us into her kitchen, off from the back wide hall. There was a woodstove, and an old pie safe full of jars of figs and peaches and snapbeans, and a Hoosier cabinet painted pink with fruit and flower decals pasted on the doors. The fireplace, not in use this time of the year, gave a damp, ashy smell to the room. In the middle of the kitchen was an enamel-top table with a glass three-branch candelabrum in the center of it.

Madame Queen told us to sit down around the table. Then she started moving her right hand in the air, making the sign of the cross, and chanting words that I couldn't catch many of, but I could tell she was talking to Jesus. Then just as I heard her demand that Satan get behind Duck, all three candles went out with a loud puff, and Duck hit the floor screaming and then was silent. I fell on my knees by Robert's chair and grabbed him around the legs. When I finally got the nerve to look up again, someone had relighted the candles and revived Duck, but even Robert was as pale as a ghost.

Looking up through the candles, I saw Madame Queen, reddish from the flame and spookier-looking than ever, but then she smiled at me, a kind smile, and I knew for the first time that she wouldn't hurt us. That she would even help us.

She gave Duck three powders. One was white and to be sprinkled in her shoes once a week; another was black and to be thrown in Blindman's face if he ever again tried to do her family harm; the third powder was brown and to be eaten if she went with a man she liked a lot but wasn't married to.

I asked if I needed to eat a brown powder when I was with Robert, and Madame Queen looked back and forth between us, thought for a few minutes, and said no, that Robert had the eyes of a dove and was a lily among thorns. She said he would never defile the Daughters of Jerusalem and that I wouldn't need the brown powder unless I grew tired of feeding among the lilies and sought the thorns.

When I complained later that Madame Queen sure did talk funny, Robert shook his head like he couldn't believe I could be so stupid, but then he admitted he wasn't quite sure what all she meant either. But he did know she was quoting some of it from the Bible, and he thought she was complimenting us both.

Then Duck poured the contents of the pillowcase out before her, and Madame Queen looked at all the treasures. I recognized some of them as trinkets and broken jewelry that Mama Brown had thrown out or sent home with Mattie: mismatched earrings, rhinestone brooches with a missing stone, perfume bottles in every color, even an old pearl necklace with a broken clasp. Madame Queen

studied Duck's valuables carefully, picking some up and holding them to the light, pressing others against her ear, as if they could speak. Finally, she picked up an emerald-green bottle that perfume had come in, held it tightly between her palms, then traced its shape with her fingertips, held it up, turned it around, listened to it, and said, "That's all."

We couldn't believe that one bottle was all she wanted for casting off Duck's spell. And we knew she had liked some of the jewelry, too, by the way she looked at it. But she motioned us out the door and walked over to the side of the porch with us, pointing to the bottle tree we had seen when we arrived.

"There's yo' evil spirit, girl," she said to Duck, "sucked up in one of them bottles. This empty bottle the perfect one to replace the one now full of no-good. You do as I say and no mo' evil gonna follow you." Then she reached over and placed the new green bottle on a bare branch, held up her hand "goodbye," and went back inside her house, closing the double doors.

X

We left Duck by the dirt road that led to Mattie's house. She said she wasn't scared anymore, not now that she had the powders. Robert took me to Mama Brown's and stayed for supper.

After we ate, we sat outside till late, under the arbor, talking about dreams and far-away places. We agreed in spit never to tell anybody what we'd seen at Madame Queen's. Lightning bugs popped all around us and the sky was particularly starry.

We saw two shooting stars that night, and made two sets of wishes: Robert wanted to be a preacher and in the movies; I wanted to be at home and in Howard. We wanted the night to last forever.

We wanted tomorrow to come.



Author's note: An opera based on this story will be broadcast on public television stations nationwide, including Alabama Public Television, in January; check local listings for the exact date and time. A beautifully printed copy of the story and libretto may be purchased from APTV at a cost of \$12.50 (plus \$2.50 p & h) by calling 1-800-239-5233, ext. 145.



Untitled
Richard A. Reading

Seamstress

Amy Weldon

Up close she smelled
of yellowed Coty powder,
bitter roses rotting stiffly
in the dark.

Her skin had formed
itself in waves, the ivory
of ancient teeth.
She stabbed us carefully
with pins; her dust
clung to the raw
white silk of gowns.

Rows of infant faces
waited blankly
on the shelves. She grew them
into bodies, dolls
of naked china,
crackling

cotton. Their frozen limbs
were bound to swollen
stomachs, linked with large
and awkward stitches.

As we left, she filled
the blackened doorway,
stranded loosely
on the porch. Her tiny mouth
stretched wide, a screaming
mute as
porcelain,

windblown shreds
of silk and needles
streaming tattered
from her hands.

Untitled

Tim Black

she comes to me
with footsteps drowsy on a damp bed of leaves
and whispers to me
rainforest whispers in my ear;
her moist tongues speak softly-
and as rain tumbles from pregnant cloud
to leaf to leaf to leaf to leaf
to ground,
soaking in, keeping alive
that which does not drown,
she blames herself
for all the life and for all the death
until some of the blame is mine
and she can fall asleep-

Flashback



Untitled
Anonymous
Fall 1993



Under Glass
Edwin G. Walls
Fall 1992

SURPRISE!

Interview by Wynne Johnson

Just knowing that Coach Bowden *must* have gotten the idea for AttitUde from reading my Editor's Note in the Fall issue of *The Circle* (Yeah, right.), I bounded into his office only to find out that he hasn't even read the issue yet. Talk about a letdown.

Actually, this is a special interview for me, because by being a Tigerette, I have had the opportunity to work with and babysit for Coach Bowden for the last year. Although I feel he already showed his charisma when he ran across the field to the screaming student section after our sweet victory over Alabama, this interview was designed with a bit of a light air about it, to give YOU., *The Circle* reader, a small taste of the spunk and enthusiasm Coach Bowden has brought to the athletic department and the Auburn community.



Wynne: Hi, Coach Bowden.

Coach Bowden: Hi, Wynne.

Wynne: Alright, you were quoted as saying, "Now I feel like an Auburn man," after beating Bama. Exactly what did you mean by "an Auburn man"?

Coach Bowden: Well, I think, and again that's not speaking in regard to the support that people give me or the support that they give this team, but in regard to how I would be felt by the Auburn family over the years. Historically speaking, if you look back on all the coaches who we think of as great Auburn coaches, every one of them had to beat Alabama to stay there. You have to beat Alabama to stay at this university long enough to be a significant part of the program and to be remembered as an Auburn man. That victory doesn't last forever, but I think I will be forever an Auburn man in the hearts of Auburn people.

Wynne: What obstacles did you have to overcome when you were first asked to be head coach?

Coach Bowden: I think first I had to let people know a little bit about me as an individual. Although my name was known, I was a bit of an unknown because I had coached at a lower division. So I went to visit as many Auburn clubs as I could (over 30) to let the Auburn family have a chance to hear me speak and to ask me questions. That was very important. I had to gain the respect of our football players because respect isn't something you demand, it is something you earn, and this obviously was a two-way street. But, on a personal side, I felt that I had to gain their respect for the way in which I lead, organized, and ran things. Then, most importantly I felt that I needed to go out and win a football game as quickly as possible. You can talk about what the young men are going to do, but until you go out and do it, you have not totally convinced anybody. So winning a game like Ole Miss was, I think, the final thing that really got our young men and our people believing that good things were going to begin to happen at Auburn.

Wynne: During those meetings and your times with the players at the beginning, did you ever get any bad vibes?

Coach Bowden: No, I really didn't. Of course there were some players that did not continue to be a part of our team, maybe because we had philosophical differences, or they just did not want to go through getting used to another coach. But, it wasn't much. One of the good things about hiring me instead of maybe some coach from California or New York or Carolina was that my roots are in Alabama, lived in Birmingham for the last 6 years, and I had a brother that was on the coaching staff. I know Auburn. I know Auburn people. And, I know what is expected of me - what they like, and I like what they like. I had a very good sense of what to do and what not to do to be welcomed and accepted by the Auburn community and that helped. Also, the Auburn people were so giving of their support. That obviously made it easier and resulted basically in no bad feelings or bad vibes from the beginning.

Terry takes us to the TOP.

Wynne: Is the fact that you started out at the top, whereas most coaches have to work their way up, putting more pressure on you than you originally anticipated?

Coach Bowden: Well, that's a misconception. Of all the coaches that are in head coaching positions, I started out at the very bottom. I did not start out at the top. Most coaches go into assistant positions at major schools. They feel that that is being a part of big-time football. I went to the lowest, smallest school to become a head football coach. *(Phone across office rings - wow! - it's a loud phone.)* At 26 years old I became the head football coach at Salem College, 500 students, a private school. And that's how I started. A team that had not won any football games the year before and had no money or resources or a real athletic heritage or tradition. *(Phone is still ringing)* Then Samford was a huge step up from Salem. Yet, that is a tiny college. I got those jobs not because I was so talented or so experienced or so well known, but because nobody wanted them. I took those jobs and somehow, with the work of a lot of good people, we took them to heights they had never been to before, winning as they had never done at Salem, *(The phone is STILL ringing)* winning like they had never done at Samford. Auburn is actually my 10th year as a head football coach. I was actually 0-7 in my first seven games of my first year. *(How is he still talking with that phone ringing?)* I have been through a lot of hard knocks; made a lot of mistakes. Fortunately, I made a lot of mistakes at places that not a lot of people pay attention to.

Wynne: O.K...(interruption).

Coach Bowden: I don't know whose phone that is. I DON'T KNOW WHOSE PHONE THAT IS!!! GEEZ! *(We are both laughing)* COME GET THAT PHONE! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO HAS THAT NUMBER! *(Wayne Hall walks in)* OVER THERE *(pointing)!* WHOSE PHONE IS IT? GRAB IT WAYNE AND SAY, "WHO IS IT?"

Coach Hall: *(Listening to the receiver)* There's nobody there.

Wynne: *(After all that, he/she hung up. Figures.)* By being chosen as Coach of the Year and having a perfect season, most would argue that you have reached the goals that coaches anywhere would strive for. What new goals have you set for yourself?

Coach Bowden: Well, I've never had to set any new goals really. All my goals are much more long-term. I have wanted to be a football coach all my life. It's no different than a teacher or a banker or a baker I guess, *(A baker? Hmm)* or whatever it is. I want to retire as a head football coach. I want to see this as a profession and not some quick rise to stardom and jump to the pros. I just believe in teaching young people in college. At 37 I've got almost 30 years to go before I reach retirement age. So, my goals were always to be steady, to be consistent, not to cut corners, and to retire as a head football coach at Auburn. I don't feel any less challenged because one of the most unobtainable goals - an undefeated season - has been reached in the first year. We need to build our program back up in a lot of ways: financially, the overall quality of personnel throughout the department, the quality of the student athletes,...we're not eligible for the SEC yet, I've never coached in a Bowl game, and I want to raise my children to go to college at Auburn.

Wynne: What would it take to make you leave Auburn?

Coach Bowden: I would not want to be here if I could not lead Auburn to the type of level that she wants to be and I want to obtain. I think there is a mutual desire for both of us to achieve excellence although not perfection. On the other hand, I am not looking for another job. I have never had a desire to coach at professional ranks although the money might double or triple what you make in college. You don't go into coaching for the money. There are a lot of other things - I've got a law degree and an accounting degree, and other things I could have done that would have been an easier way to obtain wealth. So if Auburn wants me to stay here and I can be successful, I can't see any other place I'd rather be than Auburn University.

Historically speaking, if you look back on all the coaches who we think of as great Auburn coaches, every one of them had to beat Alabama to stay there.

Wynne: As the son of football legend Bobby Bowden, you learned a lot about football by playing and working under him. What is the one most important thing you learned from him, outside of football, that has helped you to succeed in life?

Coach Bowden: To have my priorities, to keep things in perspective. That football, and I know many Auburn people hate to say this, is just a game. There are so many things more important - that we aren't as in charge of our lives as we like to think sometimes, and we aren't responsible for all the good things that happen, and that we don't always have to take all the fault for the bad things. Also, there's a spiritual side of life that is much more important. How each of us deals with that is a very personal thing. What that allows me to do is deal with all the ups and downs of football and understand that all of these things are part of the plan and work for a good. It's very similar to what I tried to teach our athletes this year. I just called it AttitUde. It's believe in yourself, believe in doing as much as you can, that you have a lot of talent, that you are very good, and that if you do your best, and if you give everything you've got, good things are going to happen. It was a simplification of a life-long lesson. Sometimes the hardest part of that to realize is that they do not always work out right away. There's a bunch of failures. But as my father taught me, failures, if you persevere, only lead to successes.

Wynne: Also, because you are a Bowden, you may be used to all this publicity. How are Mrs. Bowden and the children faring? (*When I talked to her earlier she was about dead from exhaustion*)

Coach Bowden: It's been very exciting for Mrs. Bowden. A lot of this is new to Shryl in a very personal way. Although we have been married for 7 years now, those have all been spent at small schools. She attended Salem College in West Virginia where I coached, but she was raised all of her life overseas. She was born in the DC area, where she lived for a year, and because her parents were a part of the State Department, she moved to Russia, to Japan, to Germany, to South America. Every three years she lived in another country. Obviously she never attended any Auburn games or games of any nature in regards to college football. So, this experience is very very new to her but very very meaningful. Auburn has become everything to her. My three little girls that live with me are too young. They just love to live in the cafeteria 'cause they get all the ice cream they want. Because they are 3 1/2 and under, they just know it's fun times every day with all the players and Tigerettes around. All the hoopla and excitement is like an everyday carnival for them. My oldest daughter, 11, who spends a good deal of time with me when she visits, finds it interesting, after knowing that her granddaddy was a famous football coach that everybody knew, to see her father take the place of her grandfather. Having lived apart for the last ten years, it's a very new and exciting experience for her to come and find out that her dad is pretty good at what he does, too.

Wynne: Besides football and family, what are your other interests?

Coach Bowden: I love reading, fishing, and singing, and I'm not real good at any of them, I guess. But, I read autobiographies and inspirational books, when I'm not reading football periodicals and books on teaching football. I bass fish religiously, preferably with my Labrador, and I'll sing with anyone who will sing with me.

Wynne: At Denaro's?

Coach Bowden: Denaro's is about the only place that plays my music. It's got to be ballads, folk, and it has to be from the 70's. I like Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, James Taylor, Pure Prairie League, Kansas....

Wynne: Tell me about your album collection.

Coach Bowden: I'm not a music nut. But I am, for some reasons nostalgic before my time - the 70's, my time of high school and college. My album collection goes from 1971 to 1979, from Steppenwolf to The Steve Miller Band. My only real true passion is that I'm a James Taylor guru. (*COOL word!*) I have all 16 CD's, albums, and I've probably seen him in concert eight times. He writes the kind of music I like to hear. They don't do it very much anymore.

Wynne: Well, it seems to me you've got a few other "records" to add to your collection.

Coach Bowden: Yeah, we've got a few other records, and we hope for all of us at Auburn that there's a few more out there for us.

Wynne: Oh, by the way, do you know anyone who needs to sublease my apartment for the spring?

Coach Bowden: Is this a question?

Wynne: Just joking. Last question. Who do you think is #1?

Coach Bowden: WE ARE! We are #1! We're #1, and obviously there's no bias there at all.

Wynne: Thank you, Coach Bowden.

Coach Bowden: You're welcome.



#1



Contributors

Sumarie Bass, Auburn Alumni and 1989 *Circle* Editor, is currently a marketing analyst with CARE, a non-profit relief and development organization in Atlanta. Sumarie says that working on *The Circle* was the best experience she had at Auburn.

Tim Black is a senior majoring in English and philosophy. He is currently adjusting to life as Mr. Homecoming.

Opel Blunderbust is in the witness protection program and so wishes to remain anonymous.

Thom Botsford (*The Circle's* first Editor) is presently an associate professor at Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, Florida. He wishes the current *Circle* staff the best of luck and is thrilled to hear that *The Circle*, Auburn's creative writing outlet, has lasted 20 years.

Marian Carcache is an instructor of English at Auburn University, whose work *Under the Arbor*, was made into an opera and will be aired on public television.

Jennifer Dickey is a transfer student in 02 English, and writes for *The Auburn Plainsman* and *Worm Gear*.

Mohammad Dolatabadi is a senior in art.

Perrin Ehlinger is struggling with authority and his architecture degree. He wishes he were anonymous, but kinda enjoys the [doo doo] he stirs up.

Patrick Espy is a 27-year-old architecture student from Huntsville. Some of his work is being shown at Artrax in Opelika and at DOODLES in Birmingham.

Kathy Flann is a master's student in English, pursuing a creative thesis. She has wondered for years whether or not bugs sleep and has finally found out that the answer is "sort of." She thanks her friend Joe Bill for sharing his entomology knowledge and rests much easier now.

Scott K. Godwin is a sophomore from Montgomery who gets his thrills from black & white photographs, beautiful women, neon lights, and Auburn tradition.

Mike Goodson enjoys photography.

Terra Gullett is a freshman in art.

Tomoe Ito is a sophomore at Nihon University in Japan. She spent Summer Quarter '93 as an exchange student at Auburn University.

Wynne Johnson is a senior majoring in International Business and has recently been accepted to study in England at Nottingham Trent University, where she plans to *not* inhale, and to publish falsified information about the Royal family.

Ashley Moody is working on being a 5-year sophomore and plans to graduate by the year 2000.

Ian McShane is our resident ghost writer, who didn't write anything for us this quarter, but was censored anyway.

Chris Neal is a sophomore from St. Petersburg, FL., majoring in art. He is planning to move to a small Pacific Island with his ferret, Tikki, and dance around drunkenly in his kilt. Also, he is secretly the Laffy Taffy Guy.

Scott Nesbitt is somebody, but we don't know who.

Laura Palmer is a freshman from Mobile, AL, majoring in political science and English. She would like to let everyone know that she is still alive and has never been to Twin Peaks.

Elaine Posanka is completing her master's thesis in poetry at Auburn. She's originally from New York but has decided she likes the South...if not Alabama specifically.

Zoe E. Press is from Naples, Florida.

Richard Reading is a native of Tennessee but now calls Auburn home, since he has been here so long. He is a graduate student in Community Planning who sees the world through a camera lens.

Marguerite Majilton Rhodes is originally from Miami, Florida, "the New York of the South," and is presently pursuing insanity, also known as a MA in creative writing, at Auburn. She will spend a year in Tokyo, Japan, from the spring of '94 to the spring of '95.

R.T. Smith is the Alumni Writer in Residence. He teaches poetry here at Auburn.

Susan Tanner is a senior in English and started the Psychic Club at Auburn.

Stewart Todd is working on a first-year MA in English at Auburn. He received a BA in English literature from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and has been published in *Wooden Teeth*, its literary magazine.

Cam Wales is a senior majoring in Secondary Education. She plans to get her Master's and become a high school counselor. Cam enjoys working with campus activities such as Tigerettes and Student Recruiters.

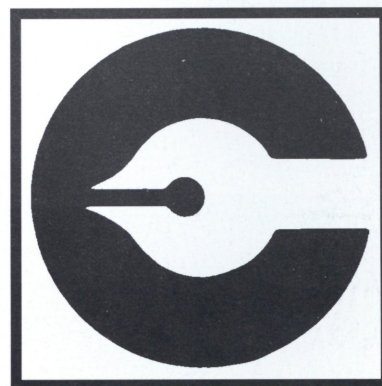
Torrence Webster is a sophomore majoring in Graphic Design from Abilene, TX. He aspires to be Prince, loves country music, and is rushing Tri Delta next fall so he can look up sorority girls' dresses.

Amy Weldon is a sophomore majoring in English and psychology and was recently appointed next year's *Circle* editor. She enjoys poetry, jazz, and long hiking trips to Colorado and is a spiritual heir of sorts; her uncle, Jimmy Weldon, was one of the original members of the *Circle* staff in 1974.

Leslie Whatley is 03 English.

Ashley Wright is a junior in Public Relations. At present, he is up to his neck in '93 *Glomeratas* and is willing to do anything to get rid of them.

Jake Adam York is a senior in English. "And thank God," he says. "I am hungry to leave." In his spare time, Jake thinks that he must be the illegitimate child of Dylan Thomas, and he says that his highest aspiration is to write one great poem, but he wouldn't mind if it turned out to be two. This year, the National Federation of State Poetry Societies published his chapbook *Corn*, which is available in the Auburn University Bookstore.



Last Word

The Catcher on the Plains

Amy Weldon

I began work on this issue in an outburst of youthful idealism, with dreams (now fact) of future editorship dancing in my head. I envisioned *The Circle* as a beacon of free thought, leading the mind of the average student from the daily grind of classes into the rarefied realms of creativity and imagination. Censorship seemed like something that could only happen to *The Catcher in the Rye*, or (sigh) to *Huckleberry Finn*. Surely, I thought, Auburn students are intelligent and mature enough to handle challenging but legitimately artistic ideas and works of literature without adult supervision. Now, I must face the facts, albeit unwillingly. Because of foreseen pressures from various campus advisory groups, Wynne and I were forced to censor one of the runners-up in the recent fiction contest before we could publish it, changing and/or altogether omitting several words and sentence fragments which might be deemed offensive. While I object to this solely on principle, and also believe that it alters the artistic nature of that particular story, I find it especially ridiculous in light of the double standard applied in similar matters elsewhere on campus.

Almost every weekend of the academic year, one may see semi-current PG, PG-13, or R-rated movies in Langdon Hall, which contain several "cuss words" and sexual situations (to be euphemistic about it.) These are sponsored by the UPC, and therefore directly funded by the university. An article about a sadomasochistic floor show in an Atlanta club, with pictures, recently appeared in the Tempo section of *The Auburn Plainsman*, which, although it is independently funded, is provided with facilities by Big Brother Auburn. WEGL plays popular college and alternative music, which, as everyone knows, isn't exactly sanctioned by parents and grandmothers everywhere. It receives funding from the University as well. The word "hell" (gasp!) appears in the official fight song; millions of fans and students scream it at every football game. *The Circle*, however, must avoid publishing anything remotely tainted with the possibility of controversy, or face serious cuts in its funding. Ironically, the publication intended to stimulate student thought and imagination must carefully toe the line to avoid creating controversy and to get the money it needs to keep publishing. Period. What is wrong with this picture?

Don't get me wrong; I am **not** condemning the other campus media and organizations I have mentioned here, only using them as support for my argument. To paraphrase the Cranberries album title, everyone else is doing it and getting money from the university, so why can't we? No one else seems to be subject to this sort of pressure, so why are we? Until someone provides a legitimate answer for the censorship placed on the *Circle*, and therefore on the student body of Auburn University, we'll all continue to wonder...and we'll keep reading 1984.



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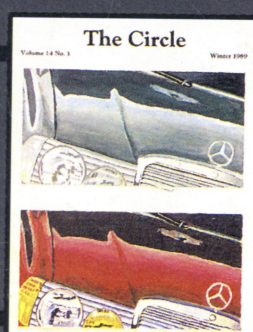
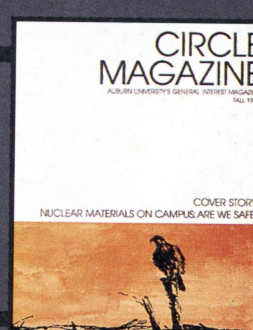
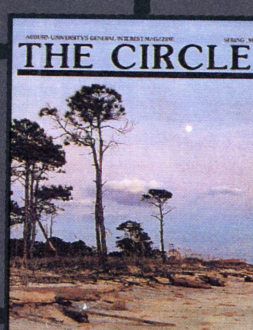
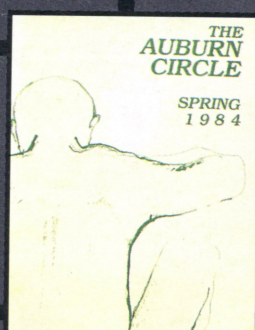
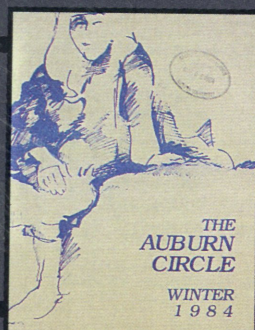
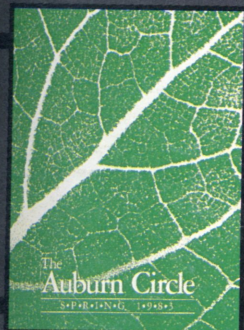
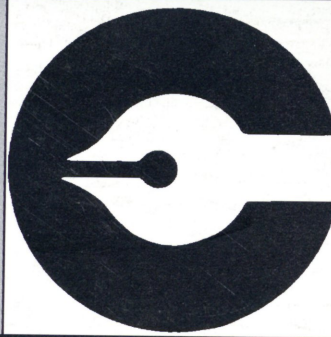
“Sure I’m sure! I’ve been a lot worse off than this and made it home just fine”



Photo by Rob Cheek

Cheers.

The Auburn Circle



20 Years

